



**SYNOD 2021-2024**  
Diocese of San Diego

# **DIOCESAN SYNOD SURVEY REPORT**

**[SDCATHOLIC.ORG/SYNOD](https://SDCATHOLIC.ORG/SYNOD)**



SYNOD 2021  
Diocese of San Diego

February 28, 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Last March, the members of our diocese participated in the largest consultation that our local church has ever held, sharing honestly with one another about elements of the life of the Church in small groups. In May, I sent to you a summary of the themes that emerged from those dialogues.

Drawing upon the results of this synodal consultation, our Synodal Commission prepared a survey to systematically ask the people of God in San Diego and Imperial counties about their opinions on the major questions that emerged from the small group dialogues. More than 27,000 Catholics took this survey. Their answers provide important insights into the life of the Church, the challenges we face, those issues that unite us and those that divide us.

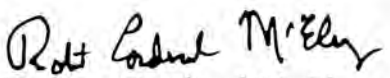
Included with this letter you will find the responses of our people to each of the 36 questions in the survey. I think you will find them very interesting.

Professors Fred Galloway and Robert Donmeyer of the University of San Diego, who have great expertise in the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, have analyzed the results from the survey to provide perspective and insight on what our people said. Their report is included for your information. Professors Galloway and Donmeyer found that the response rate to the survey reflected well the ethnic, racial and cultural communities of our diocese. They also noted that the willingness of so many people to answer these personal questions about life and faith is a sign of our parishioners' deep love for God and the Church. Interestingly, they found that in response to the question of what change you would most like to see in your parish, the respondents put helping to spread the faith first, outreach to the poor and the marginalized second, making the parish more welcoming third, better homilies fourth, and less emphasis on money fifth.

The respondents found immense grace in the sacramental life of the Church and in the deep sense of community and shared belonging they find in their parishes and organizations.

I urge you to read the responses to each of the questions so that we can all better understand the magnificence and the challenges of the Church that we love.

With all best wishes, I remain

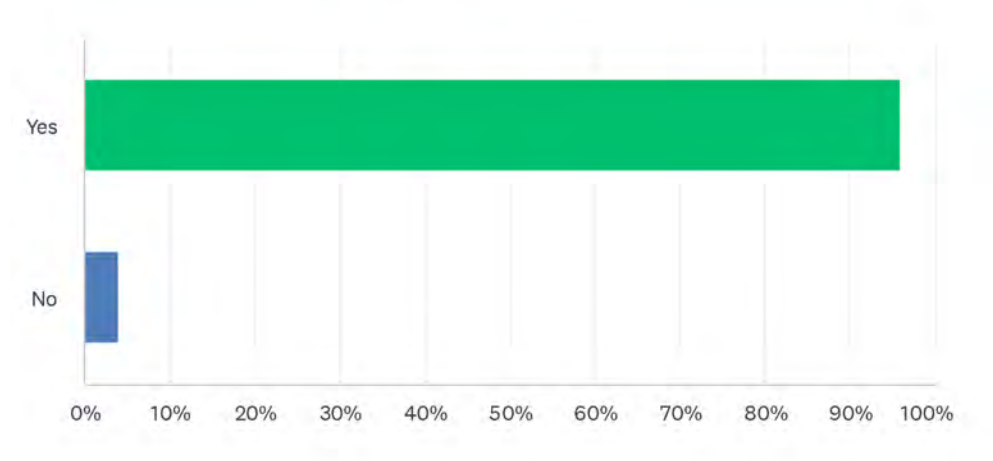
  
Robert Cardinal McElroy



**SYNOD 2021-2024**  
**SAN DIEGO SYNOD SURVEY**

# Q1 Are You Catholic?

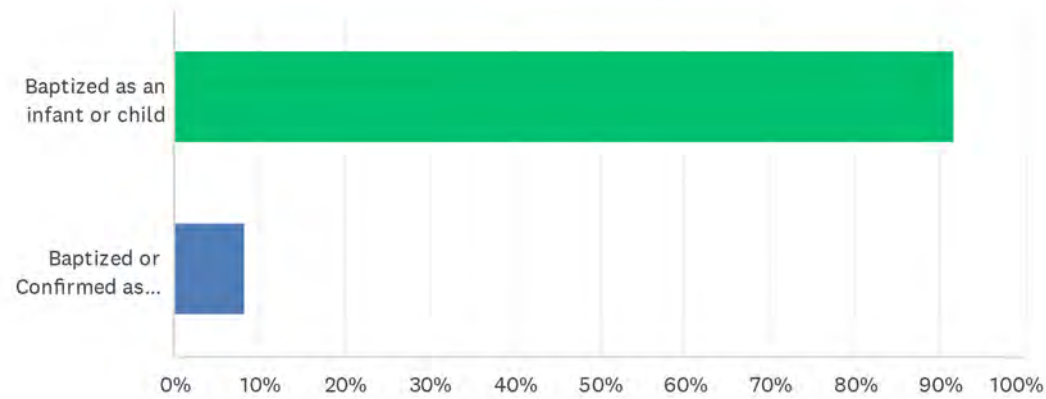
Answered: 27,670    Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		95.89%	26,533
No		4.11%	1,137
TOTAL			27,670

Q2 When did you become Catholic?

Answered: 26,026    Skipped: 1,644

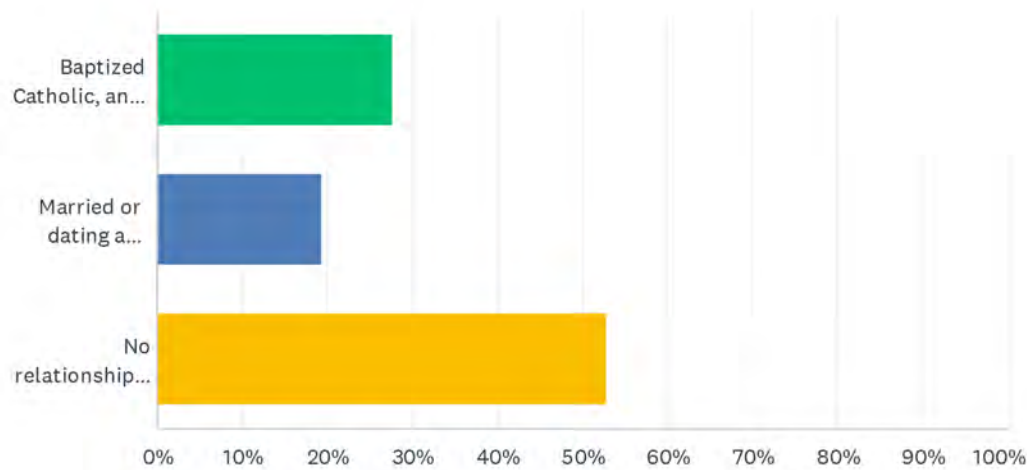


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Baptized as an infant or child		91.60%	23,841
Baptized or Confirmed as an adult		8.40%	2,185
TOTAL			26,026



Q3 What is your current relationship with the Catholic Church?

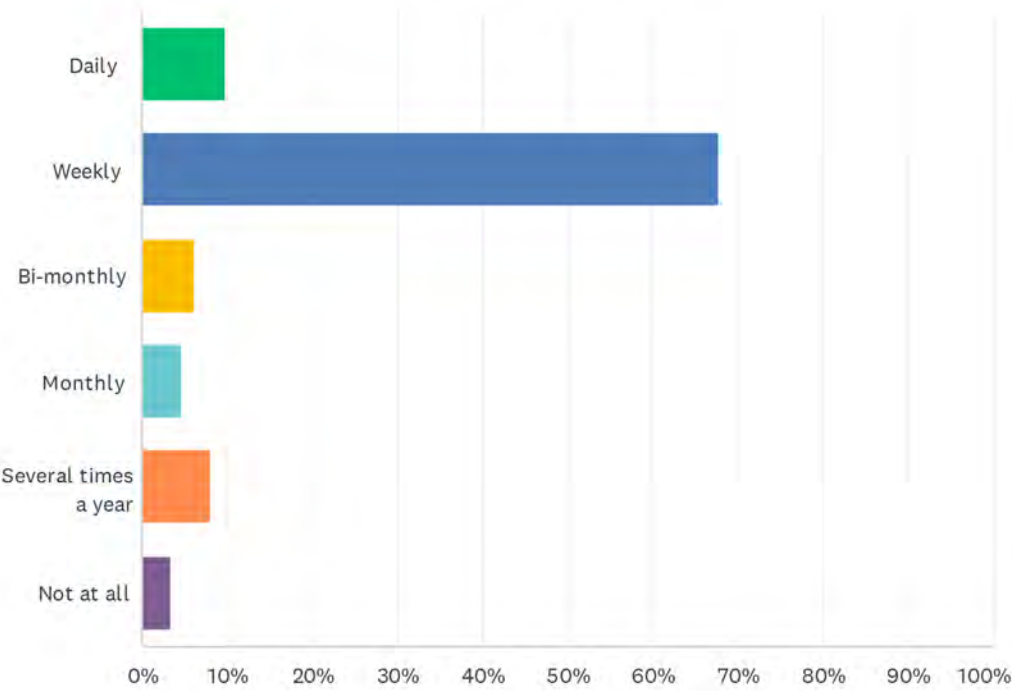
Answered: 1,087    Skipped: 26,583



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Baptized Catholic, and no longer consider myself Catholic	27.78%	302
Married or dating a Catholic	19.41%	211
No relationship with the Catholic Church	52.81%	574
TOTAL		1,087

Q4 How often do you typically attend Mass either in-person or virtually?

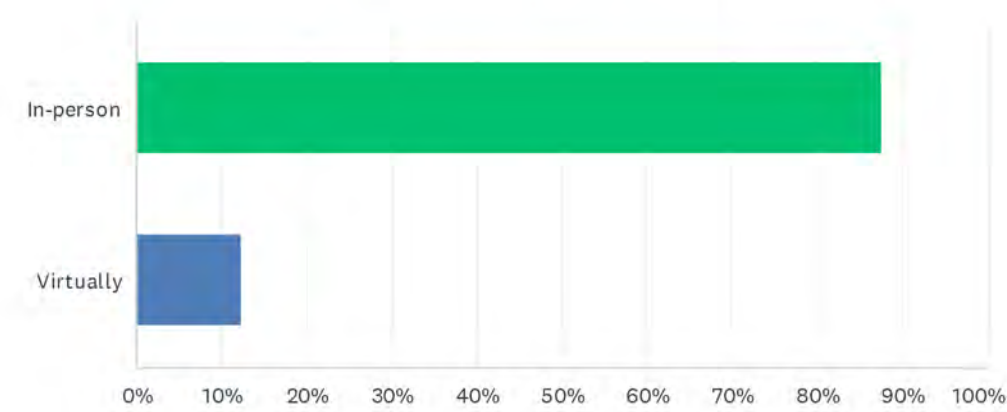
Answered: 24,642    Skipped: 3,028



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Daily	9.72%	2,396
Weekly	67.84%	16,717
Bi-monthly	6.18%	1,524
Monthly	4.76%	1,172
Several times a year	8.12%	2,001
Not at all	3.38%	832
TOTAL		24,642

Q5 Given the recent history of COVID, do you intend to worship mostly

Answered: 24,538    Skipped: 3,132

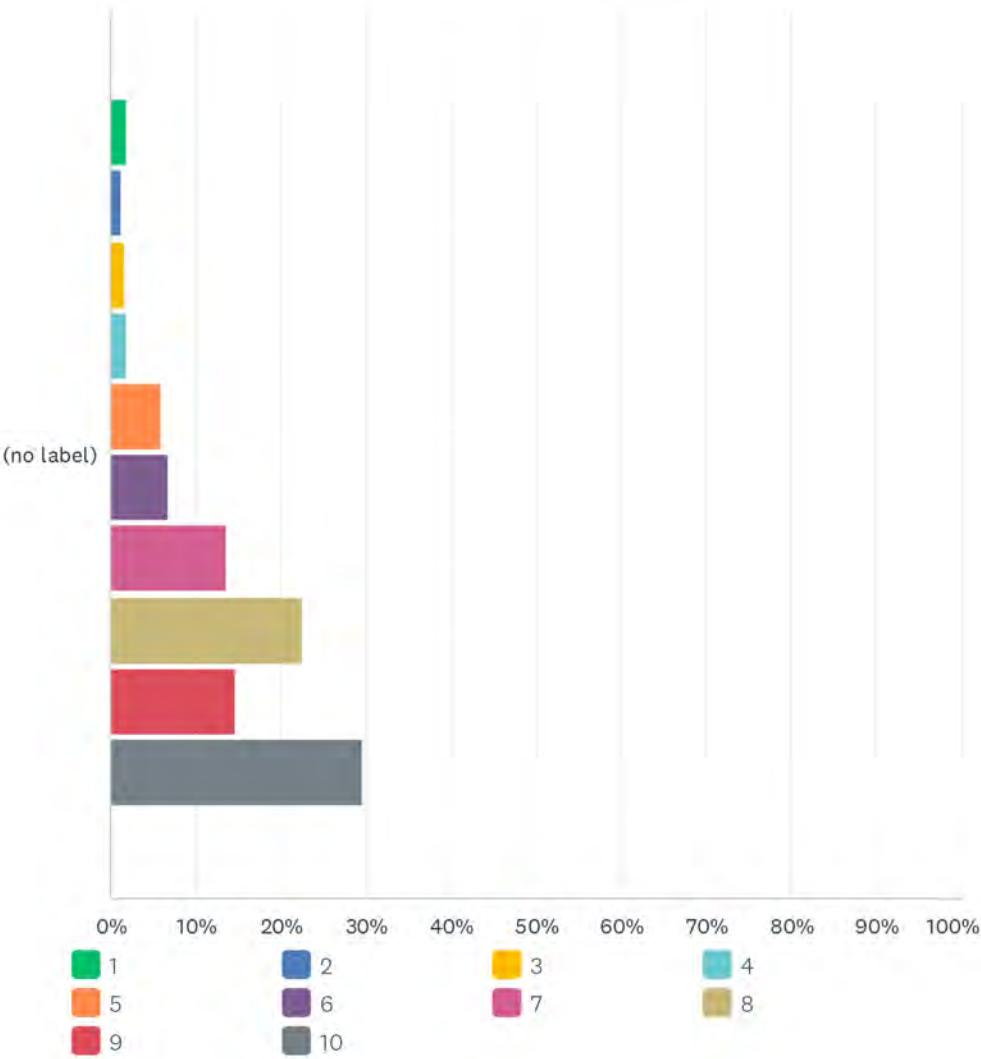


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
In-person		87.71%	21,523
Virtually		12.29%	3,015
TOTAL			24,538



Q6 On a 1-10 scale (with higher numbers associated with stronger feelings) how strong is your relationship with God?

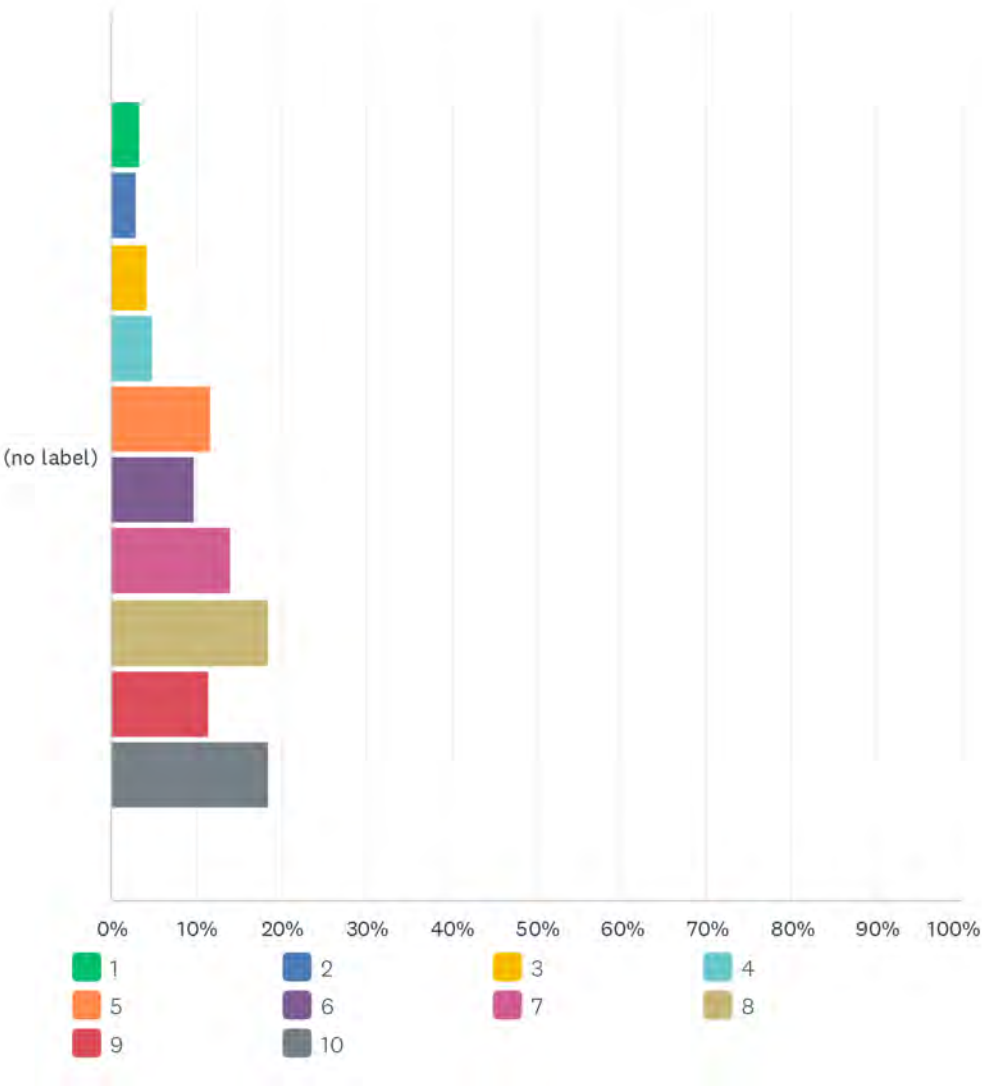
Answered: 24,345 Skipped: 3,325



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	1.96%	1.17%	1.61%	1.82%	5.91%	6.81%	13.59%	22.66%	14.73%	29.73%	24,345	7.12
	476	286	393	443	1,438	1,659	3,309	5,516	3,587	7,238		

Q7 On a 1-10 scale (with higher numbers associated with stronger feelings) how strong is your relationship with the Church?

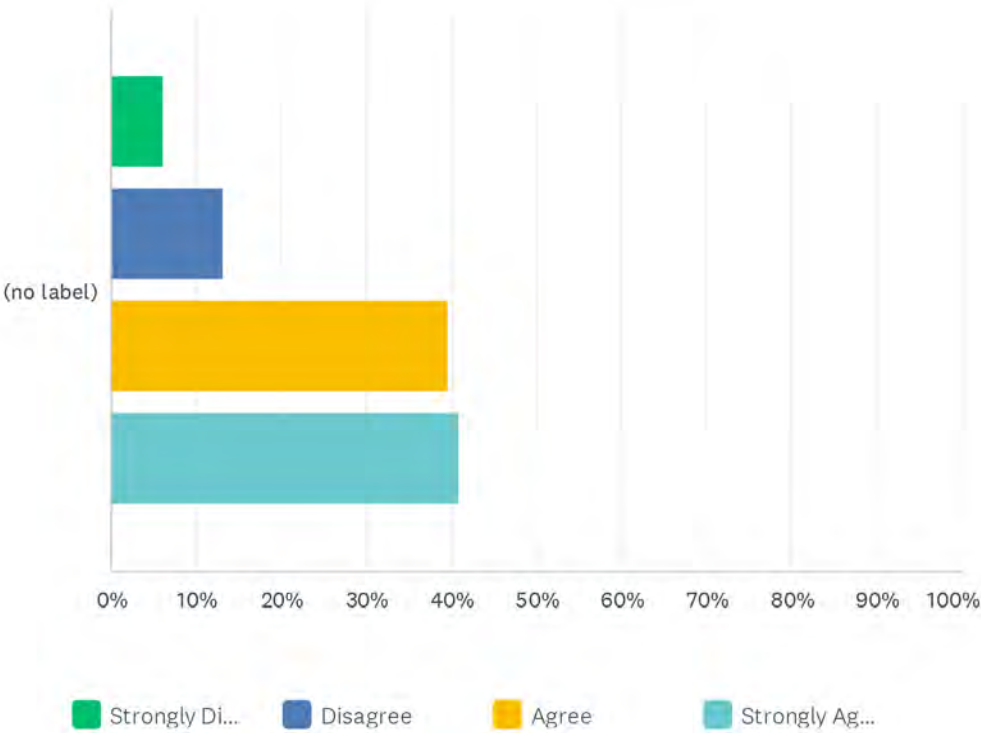
Answered: 24,187    Skipped: 3,483



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	3.47% 840	3.02% 731	4.33% 1,048	4.97% 1,202	11.74% 2,839	9.87% 2,387	14.02% 3,391	18.52% 4,480	11.59% 2,804	18.46% 4,465	24,187	6.96

Q8 Participation in the Mass is my most meaningful ongoing encounter with God.

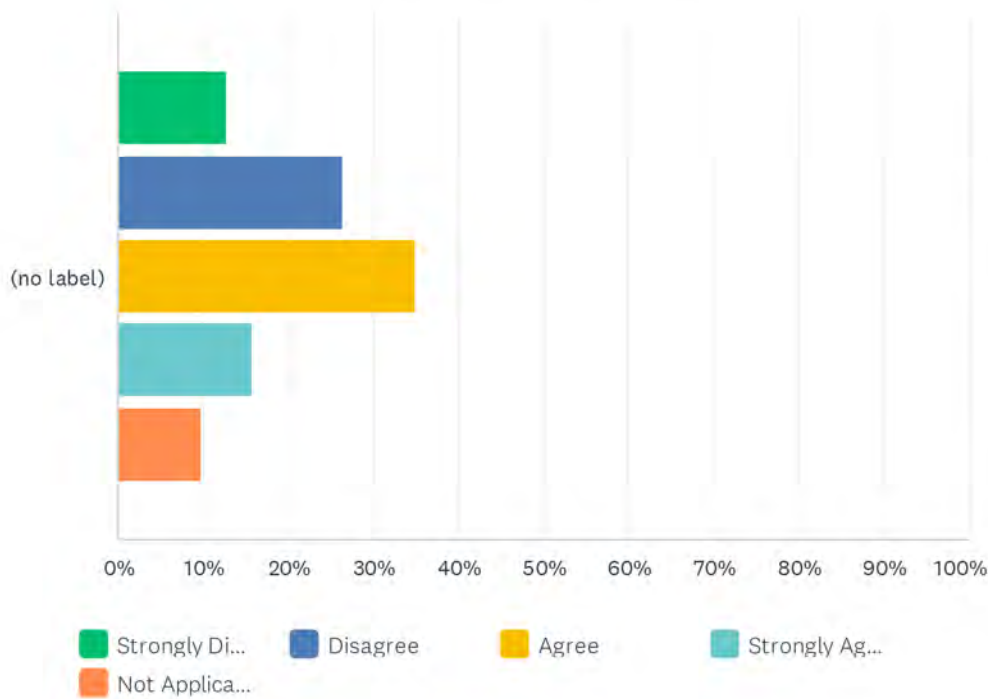
Answered: 23,945    Skipped: 3,725



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	6.26% 1,500	13.23% 3,169	39.60% 9,482	40.90% 9,794	23,945	3.15

Q9 If I stopped participating in my parish, I would be missed.

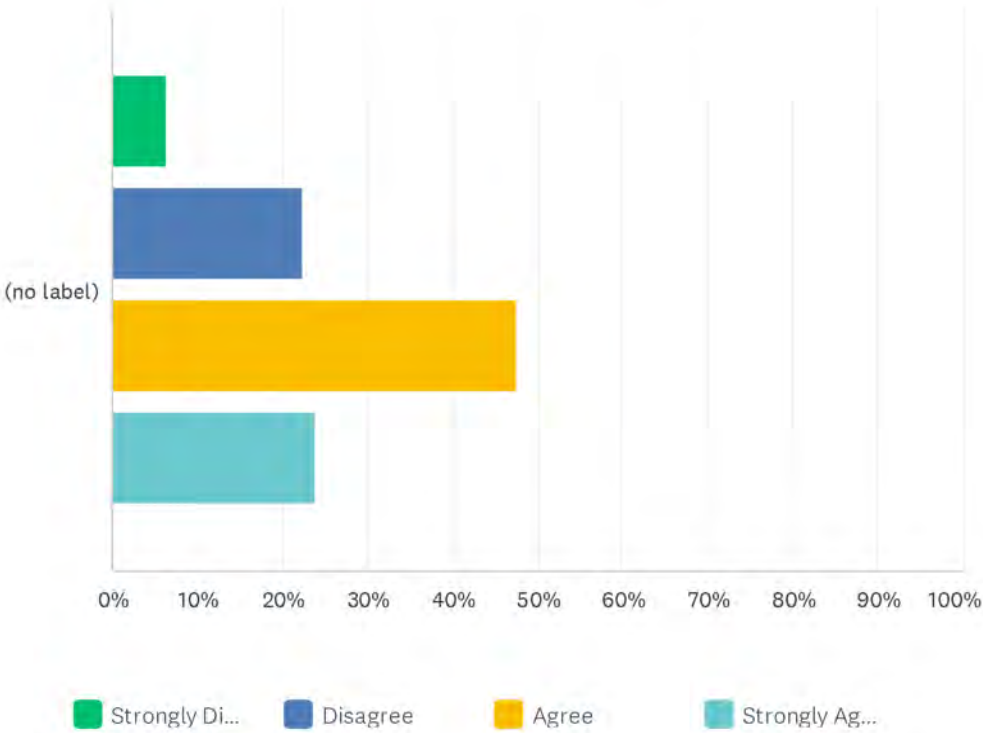
Answered: 23,822    Skipped: 3,848



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NOT APPLICABLE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	12.82% 3,055	26.50% 6,314	35.06% 8,353	15.82% 3,768	9.79% 2,332	23,822	2.60

Q10 The sexual abuse scandal makes it difficult to attract people to the Church.

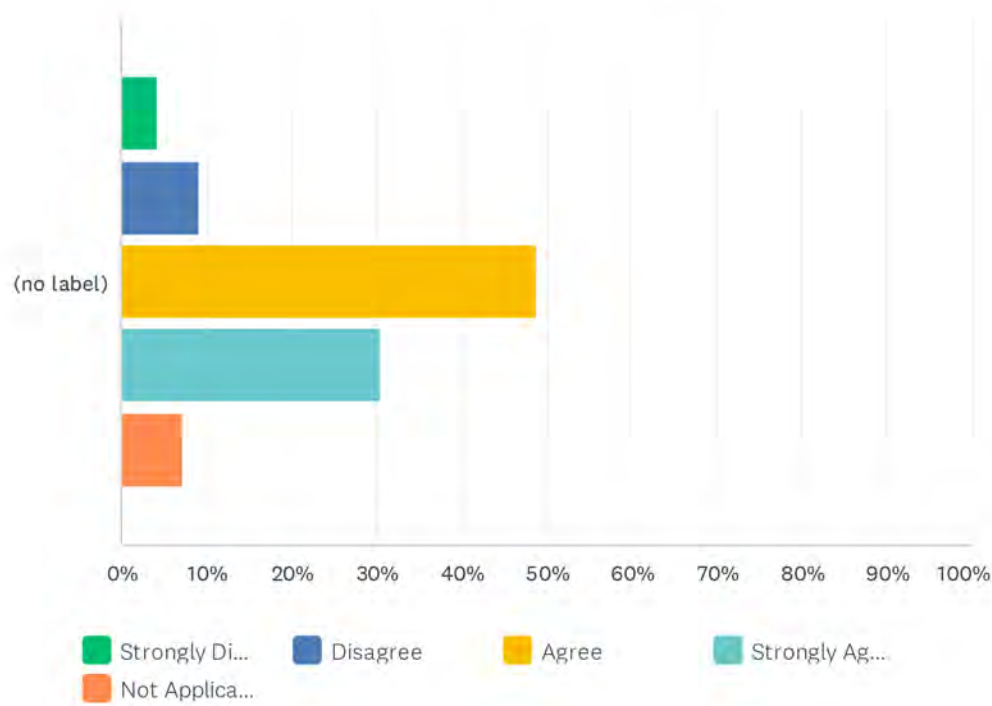
Answered: 23,691    Skipped: 3,979



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	6.33% 1,500	22.32% 5,287	47.56% 11,268	23.79% 5,636	23,691	2.89

Q11 My parish does a good job of balancing inclusiveness/acceptance with the importance of observing the Church's rules.

Answered: 23,545 Skipped: 4,125

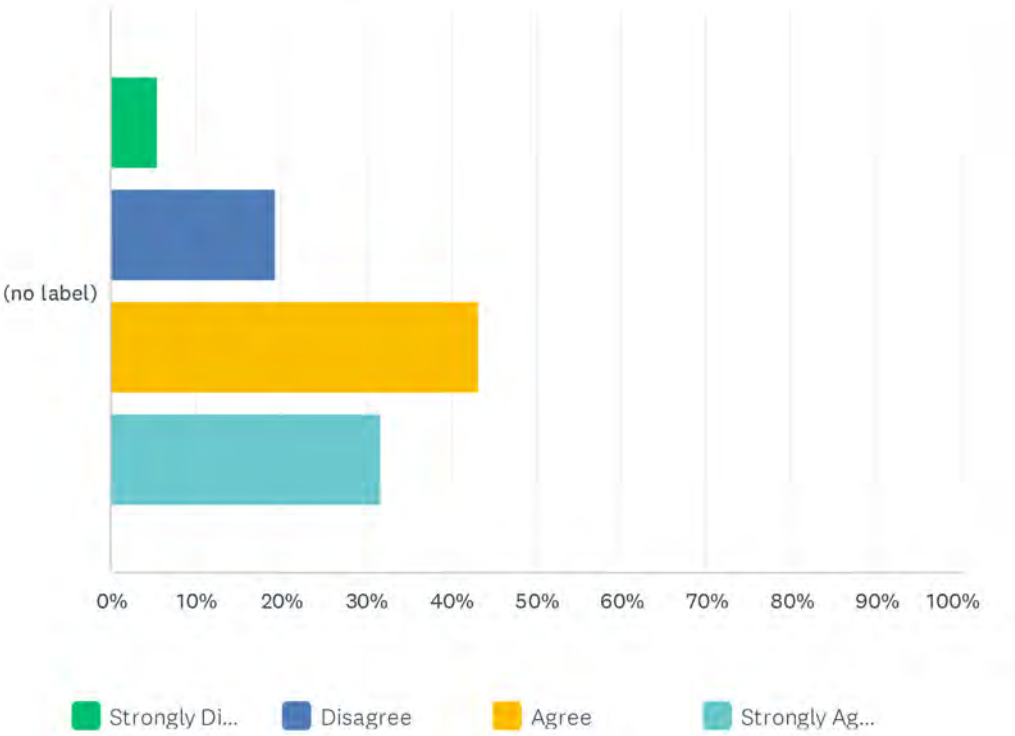


	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NOT APPLICABLE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	4.28% 1,008	9.12% 2,148	48.78% 11,485	30.58% 7,200	7.24% 1,704	23,545	3.14



Q12 The Church is my primary pathway to God.

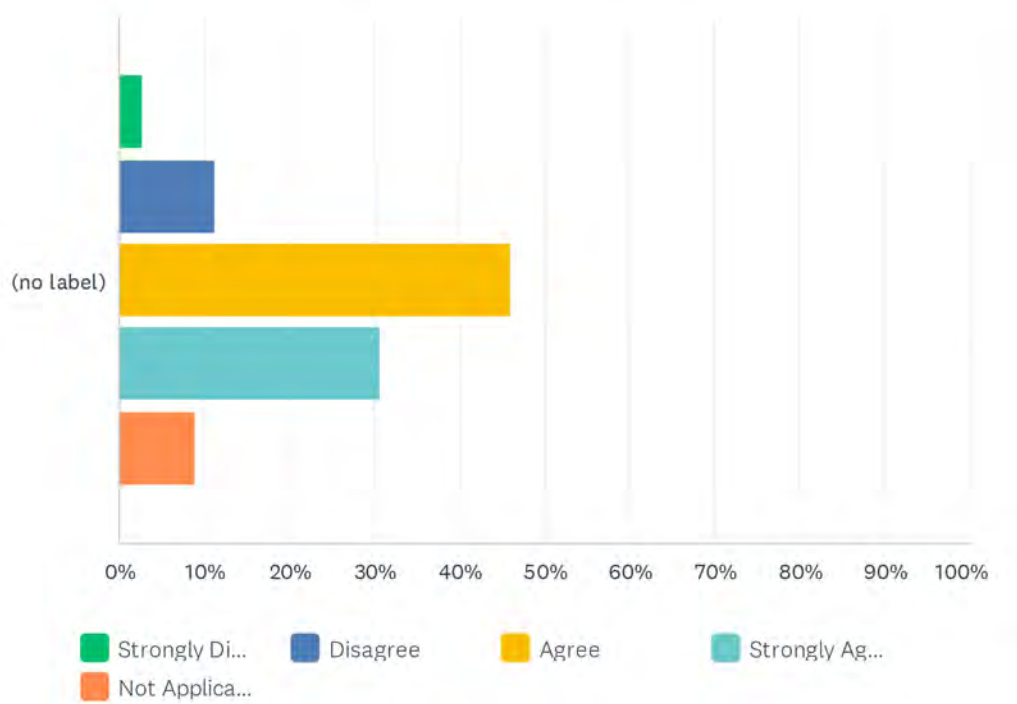
Answered: 23,488    Skipped: 4,182



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	5.62% 1,320	19.32% 4,539	43.32% 10,176	31.73% 7,453	23,488	3.01

Q13 Friendships in my parish are important to me.

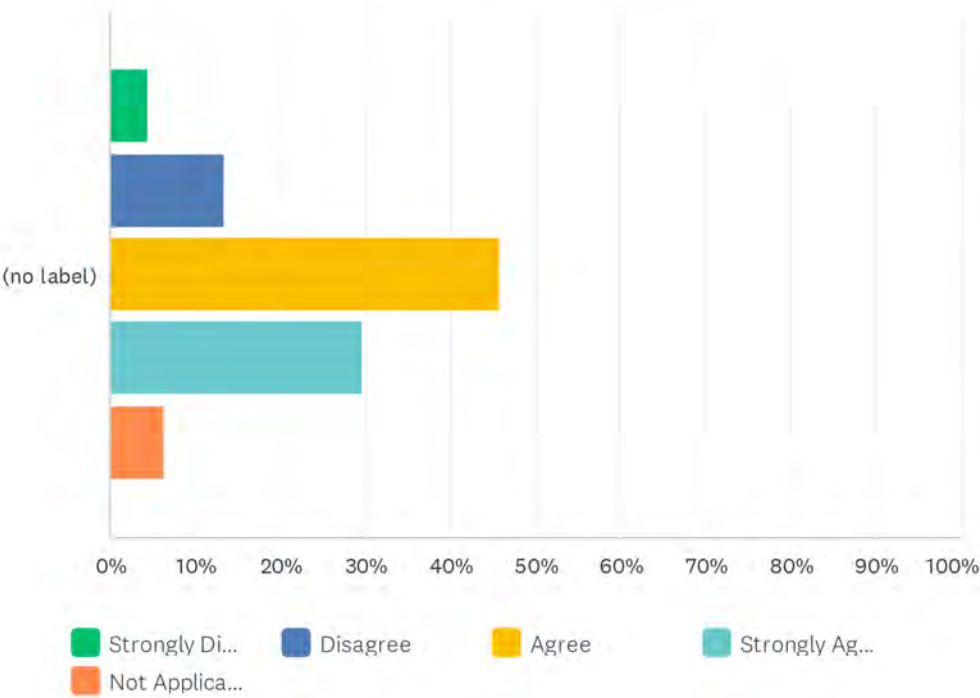
Answered: 23,427    Skipped: 4,243



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NOT APPLICABLE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	2.86% 671	11.41% 2,672	46.03% 10,783	30.79% 7,214	8.91% 2,087	23,427	3.15

Q14 Over the years, my parish priests have helped me grow in my relationship with God.

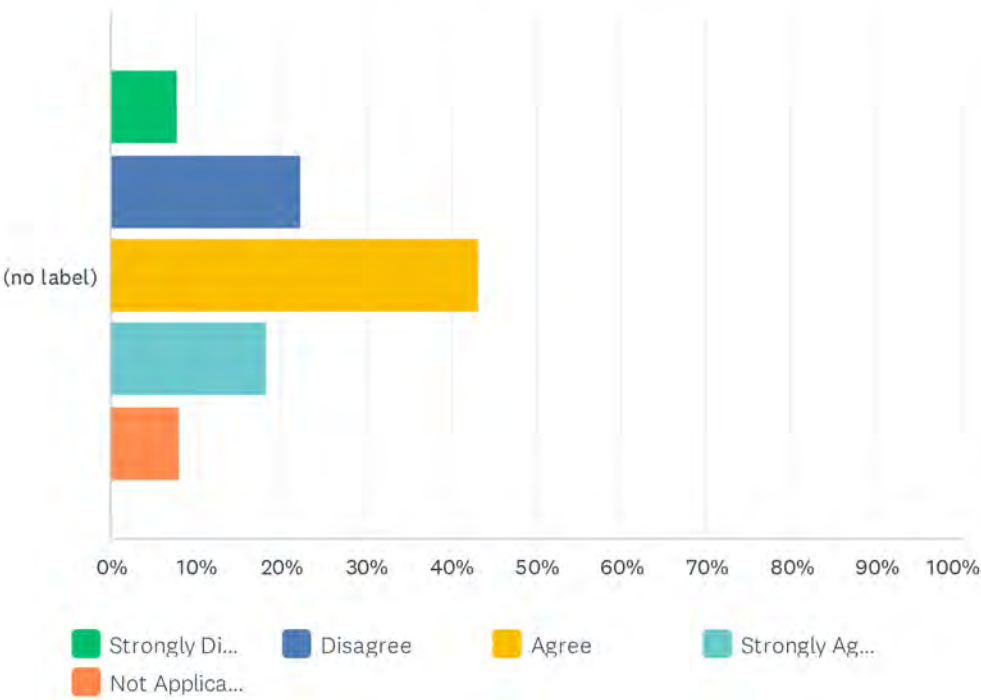
Answered: 23,340    Skipped: 4,330



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NOT APPLICABLE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	4.49% 1,048	13.41% 3,131	45.88% 10,708	29.73% 6,940	6.48% 1,513	23,340	3.08

Q15 My parish does a good job drawing younger people into a greater faith with God.

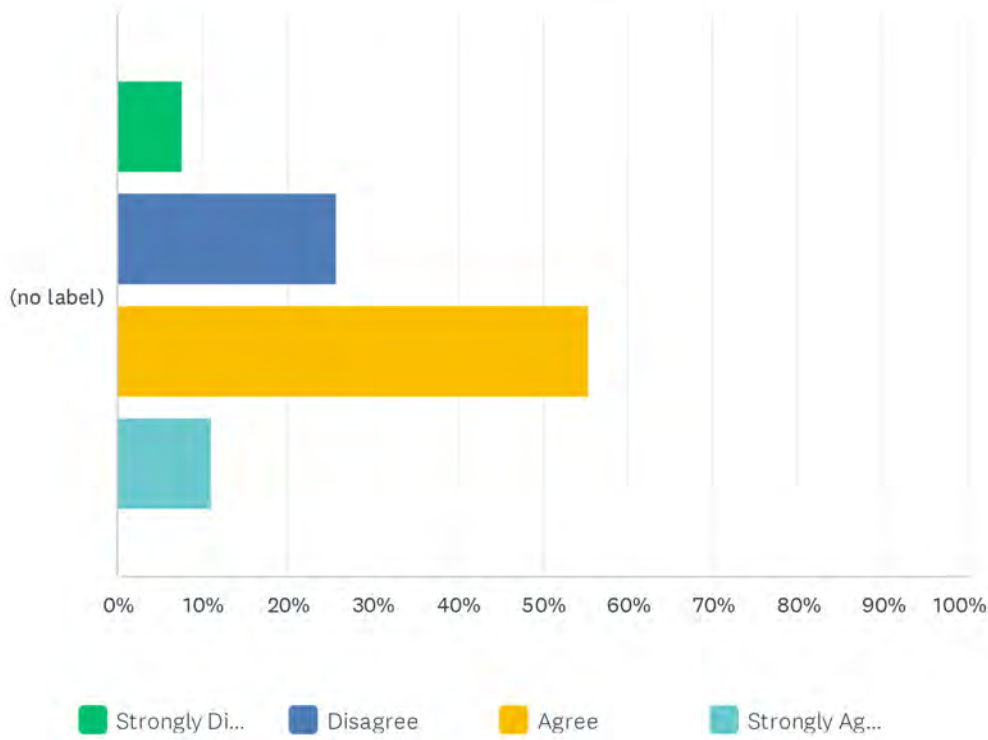
Answered: 23,249    Skipped: 4,421



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NOT APPLICABLE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	7.89% 1,834	22.32% 5,190	43.24% 10,053	18.42% 4,282	8.13% 1,890	23,249	2.79

Q16 The Church listens.

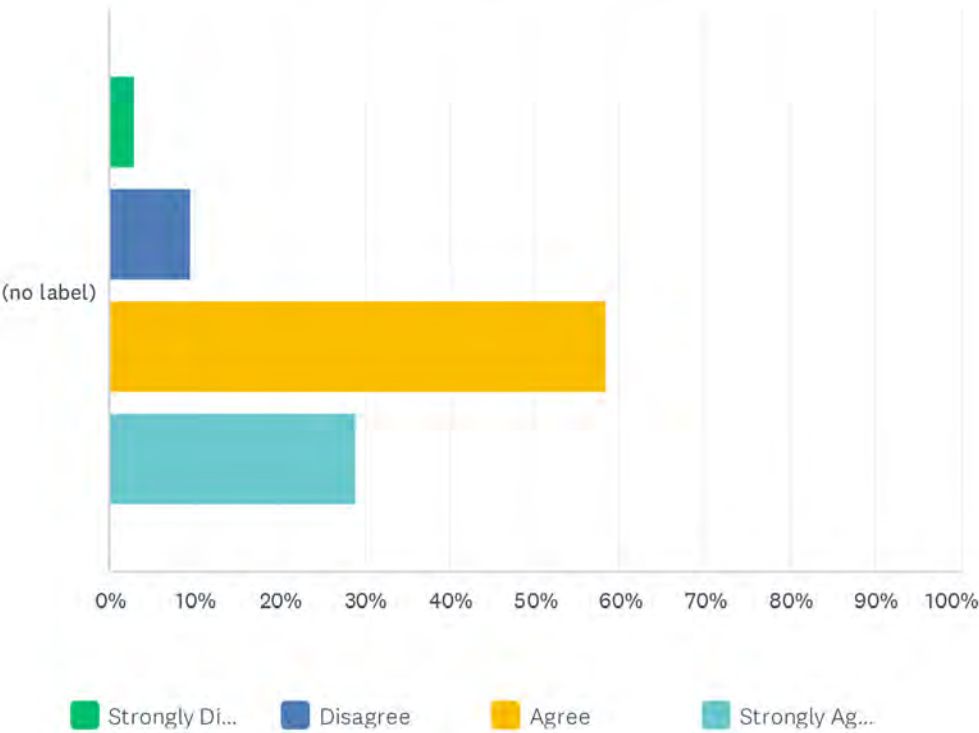
Answered: 23,178    Skipped: 4,492



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	7.64% 1,771	25.80% 5,981	55.46% 12,855	11.09% 2,571	23,178	2.70

Q17 Participation in Mass helps me to live out the Gospel by loving my neighbor.

Answered: 23,107    Skipped: 4,563

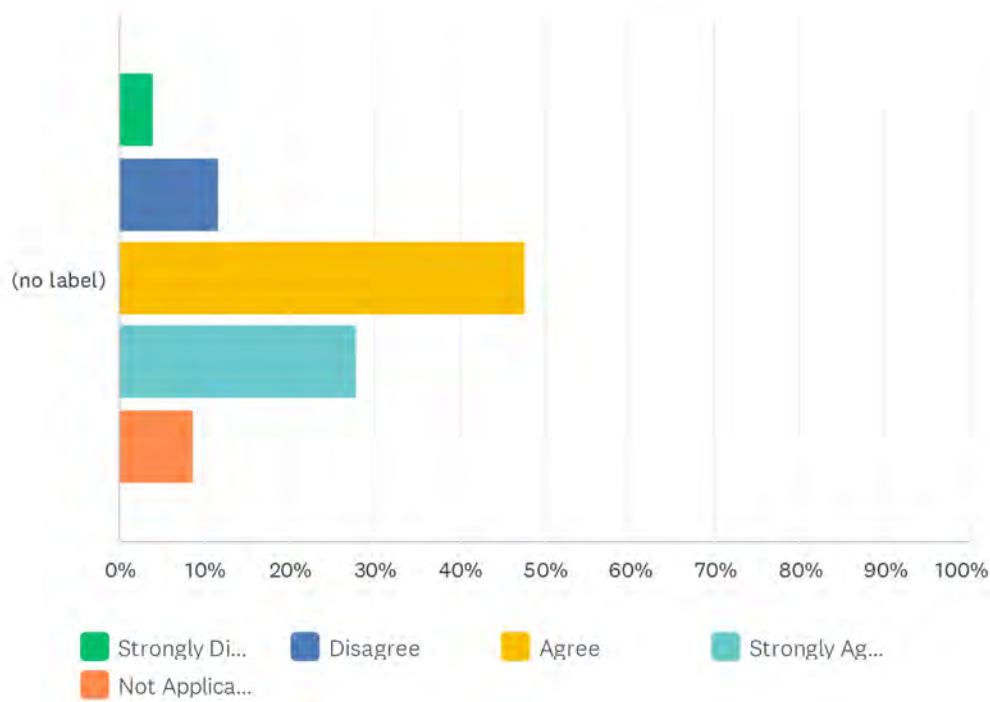


	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	3.07%	9.52%	58.48%	28.93%	23,107	3.13
	710	2,200	13,513	6,684		



Q18 My parish effectively forms young people in the Catholic faith through Catholic School or religious education programs.

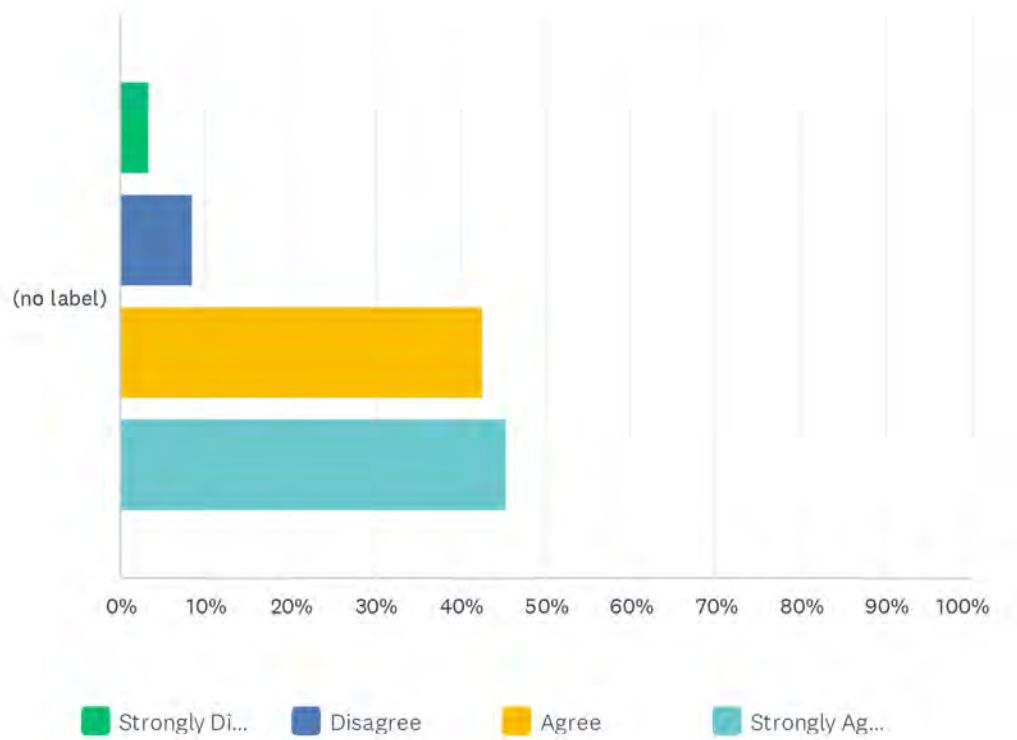
Answered: 23,021    Skipped: 4,649



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NOT APPLICABLE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	3.96% 911	11.65% 2,682	47.77% 10,998	27.84% 6,410	8.77% 2,020	23,021	3.09

Q19 The cover-up of sexual abuse cases conducted by some bishops, rather than individual cases, was the most disappointing.

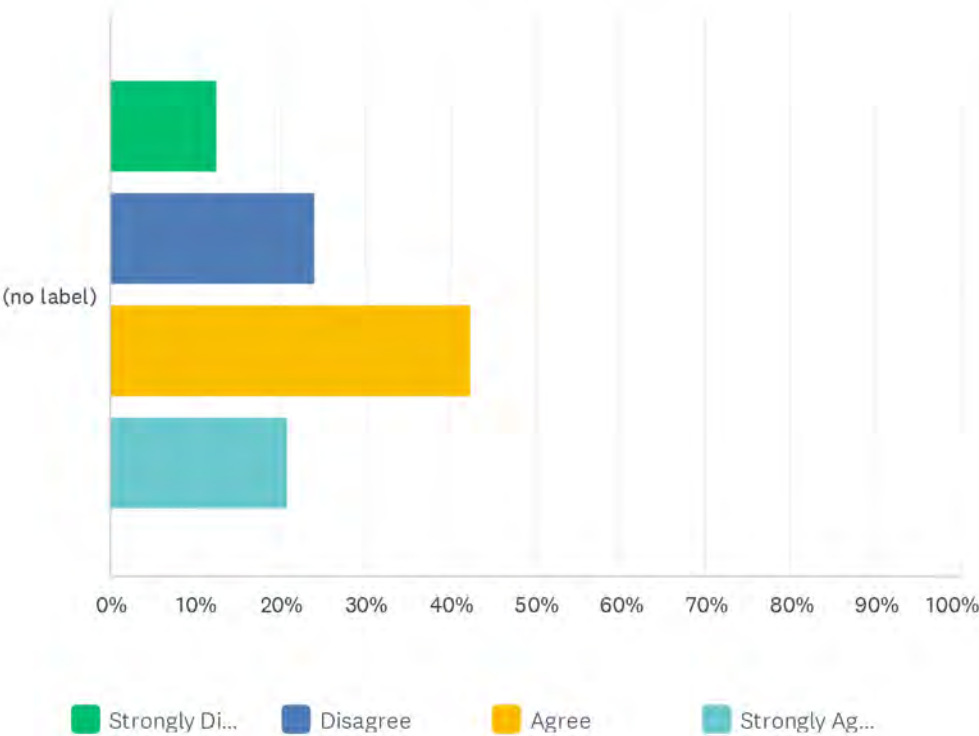
Answered: 22,920    Skipped: 4,750



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	3.39% 777	8.55% 1,959	42.63% 9,770	45.44% 10,414	22,920	3.30

Q20 Inclusiveness and acceptance in the Church are more important than strictly following Church rules.

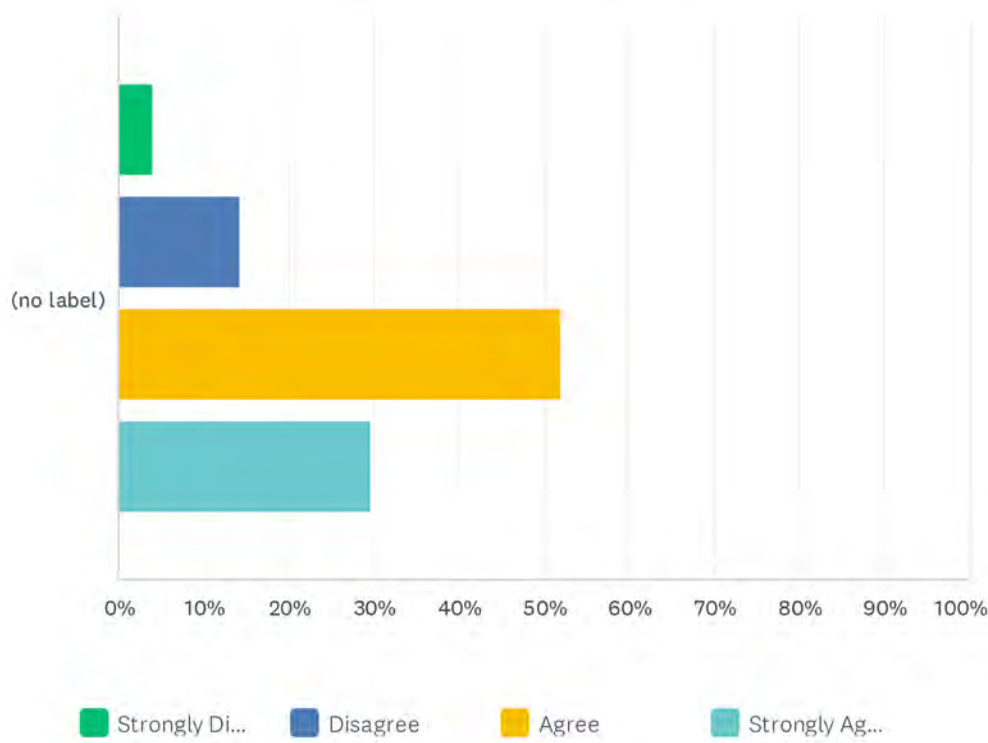
Answered: 22,814    Skipped: 4,856



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	12.57% 2,868	24.08% 5,493	42.47% 9,689	20.88% 4,764	22,814	2.72

Q21 The Church plays a significant role in my moral decision making.

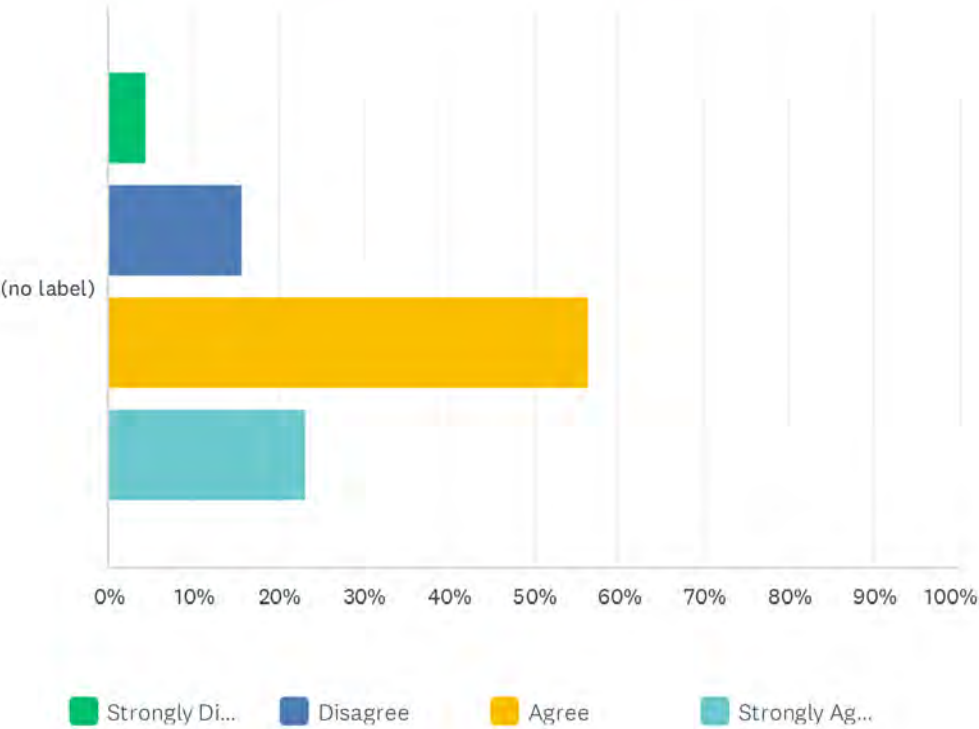
Answered: 22,766 Skipped: 4,904



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	4.08%	14.38%	52.00%	29.54%	22,766	3.07
	929	3,273	11,838	6,726		

Q22 The Church's emphasis on the importance of lay ministries is crucial in responding to the declining number of priests.

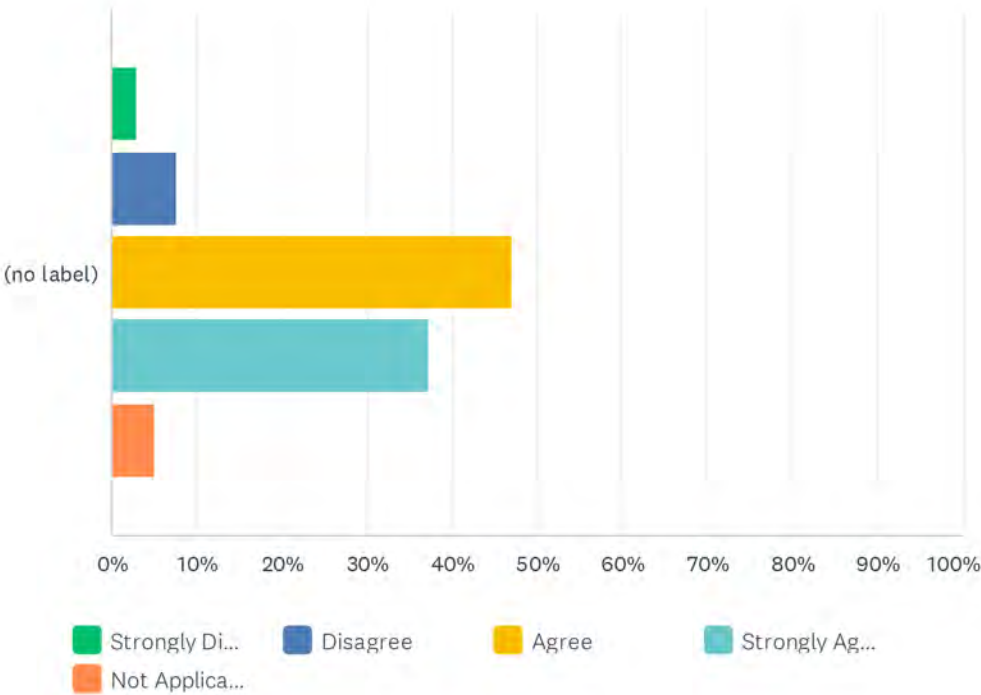
Answered: 22,640    Skipped: 5,030



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	4.43% 1,004	15.71% 3,556	56.57% 12,808	23.29% 5,272	22,640	2.99

Q23 I feel welcomed and valued in my parish community.

Answered: 22,607 Skipped: 5,063

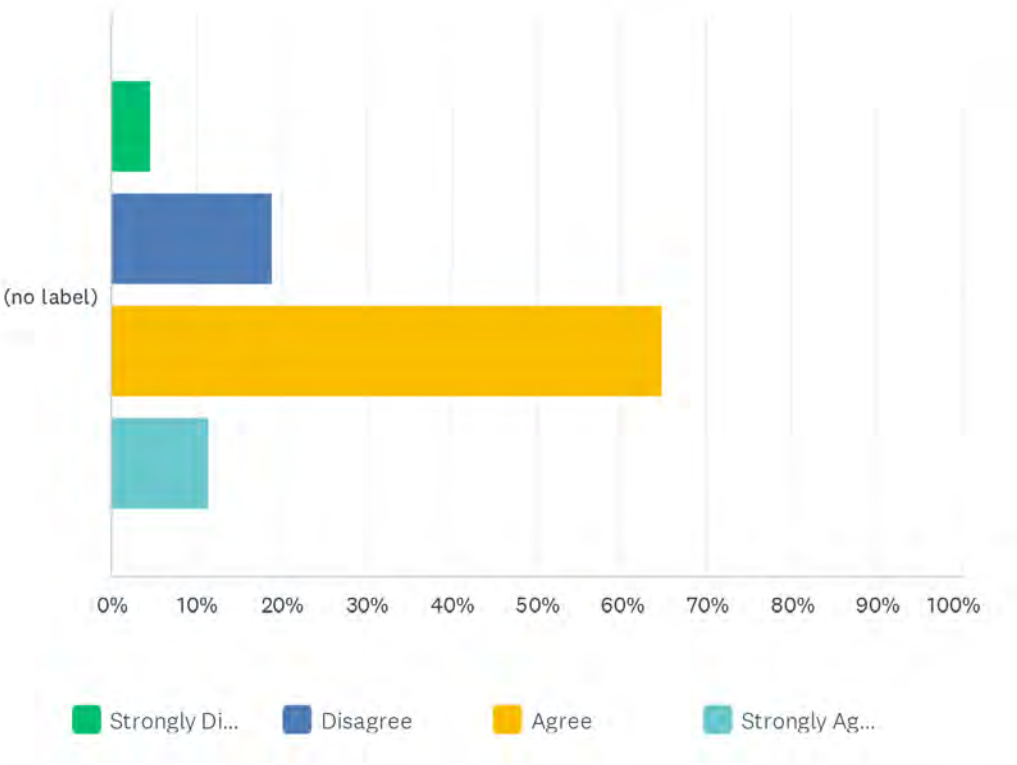


	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NOT APPLICABLE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	2.90% 655	7.61% 1,720	47.17% 10,663	37.27% 8,425	5.06% 1,144	22,607	3.25



Q24 The Catholic Church is now handling sexual abuse issues more positively.

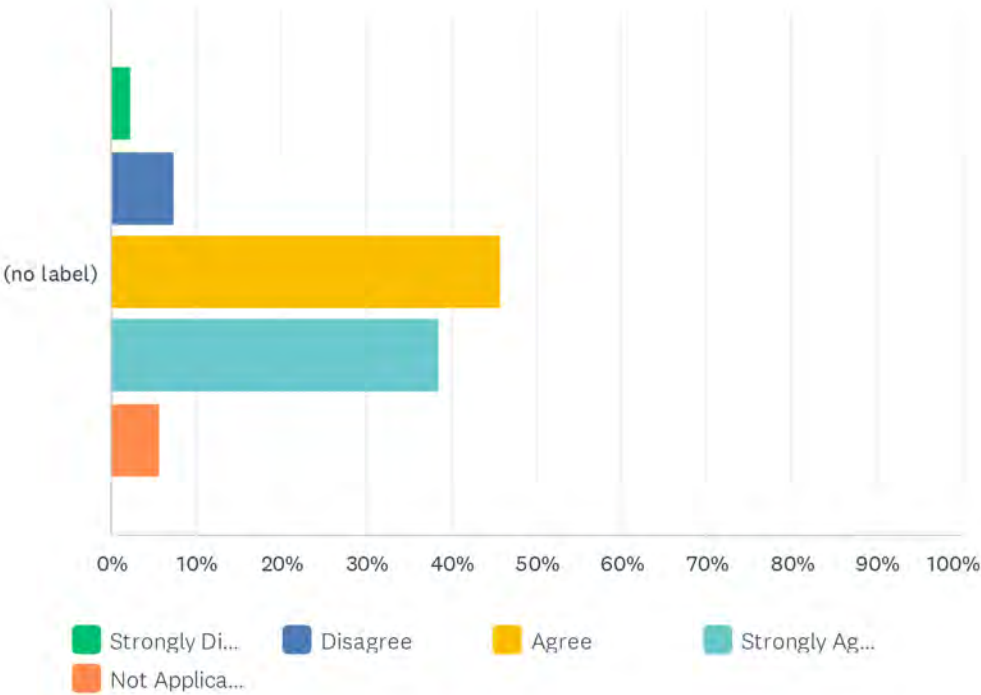
Answered: 22,547    Skipped: 5,123



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	4.71%	18.99%	64.78%	11.52%	22,547	2.83
	1,063	4,282	14,605	2,597		

Q25 Participating in my parish draws me closer to God.

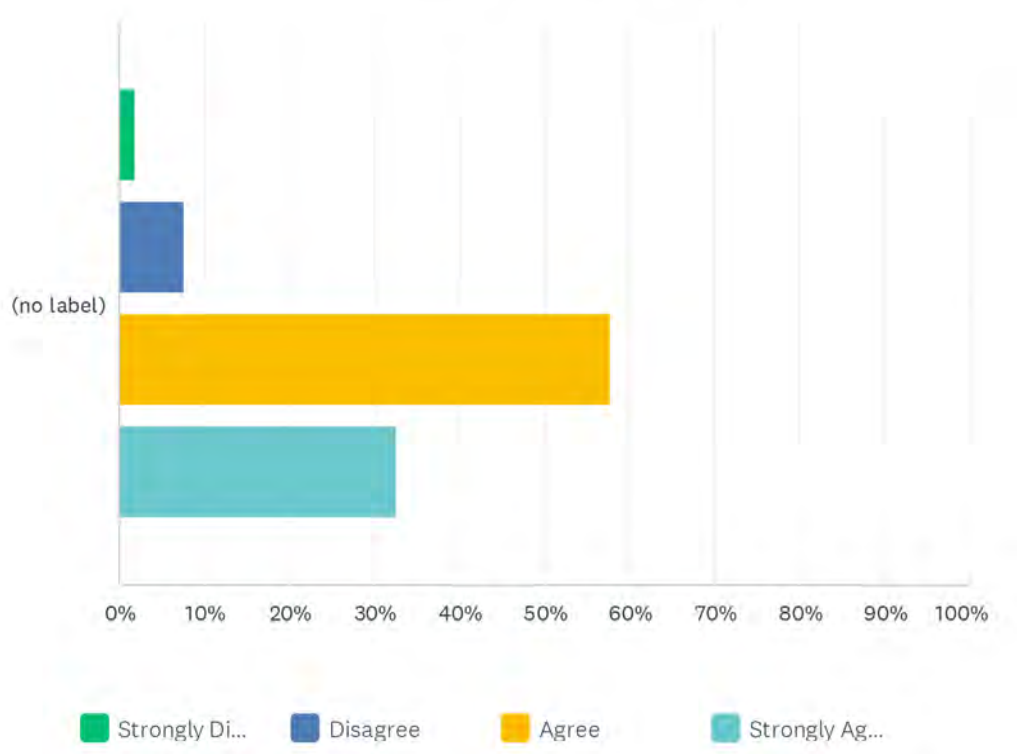
Answered: 22,514 Skipped: 5,156



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NOT APPLICABLE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	2.32%	7.43%	45.74%	38.69%	5.83%	22,514	3.28
	522	1,672	10,297	8,711	1,312		

Q26 The Church must achieve a deeper level of participation and collaboration from all its members.

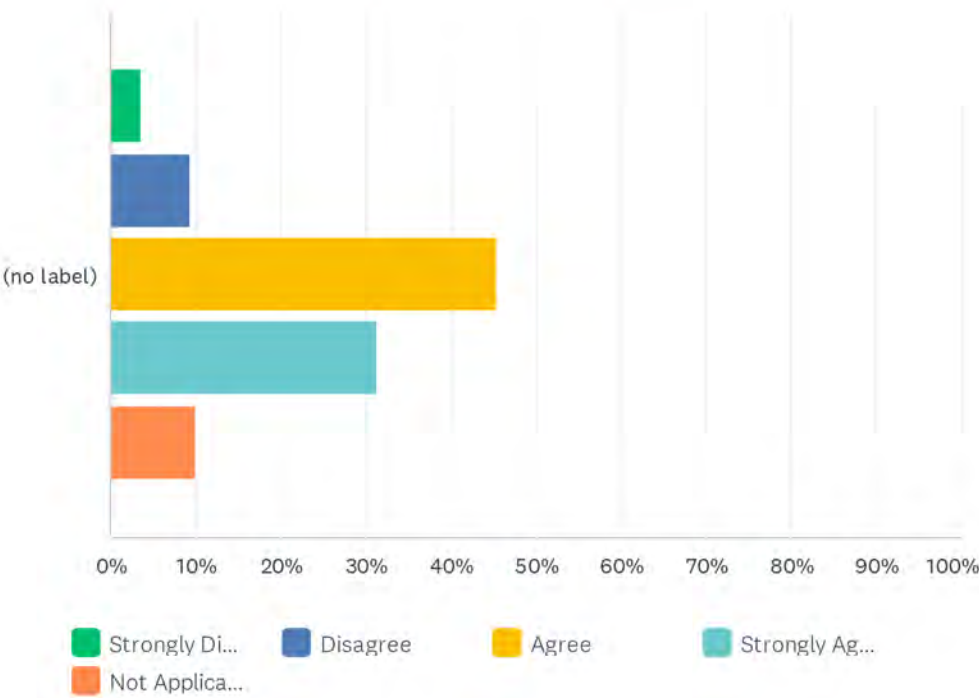
Answered: 22,471    Skipped: 5,199



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	1.87% 420	7.77% 1,745	57.76% 12,979	32.61% 7,327	22,471	3.21

Q27 My parish priest does a good job at handling issues facing the parish and the community.

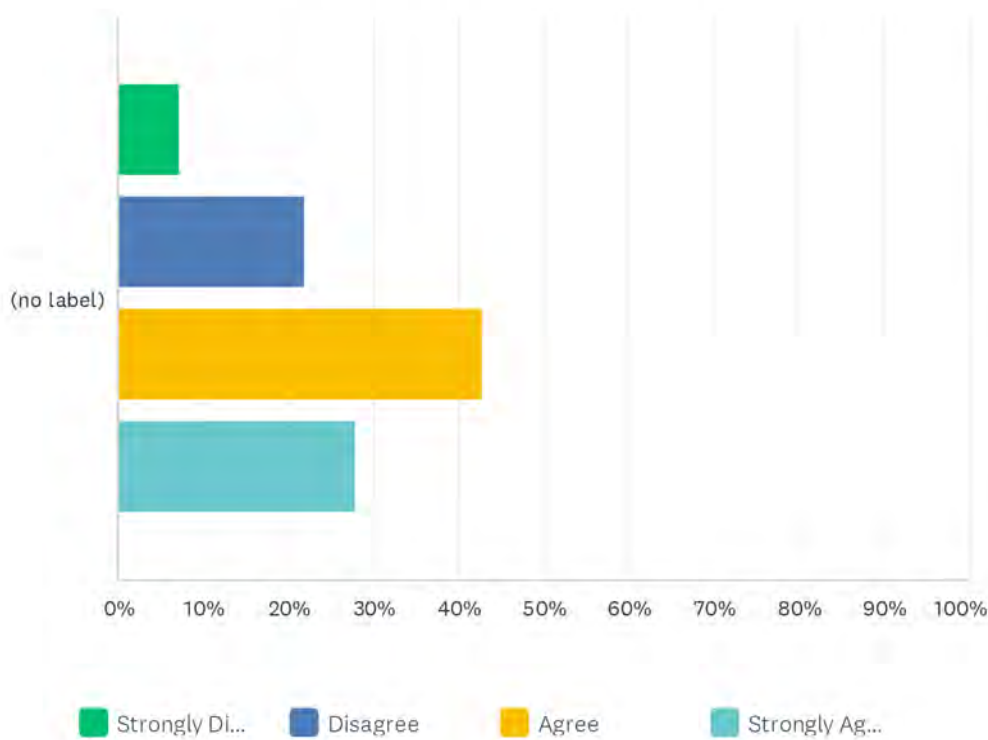
Answered: 22,433    Skipped: 5,237



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	NOT APPLICABLE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	3.67% 823	9.45% 2,120	45.43% 10,192	31.40% 7,044	10.05% 2,254	22,433	3.16

Q28 I have participated in at least one group in the Church, which helped me grow as a disciple of Christ. (Some examples are Cursillo, Matrimonios, Lector, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, Young Adult Ministry and Legion of Mary)

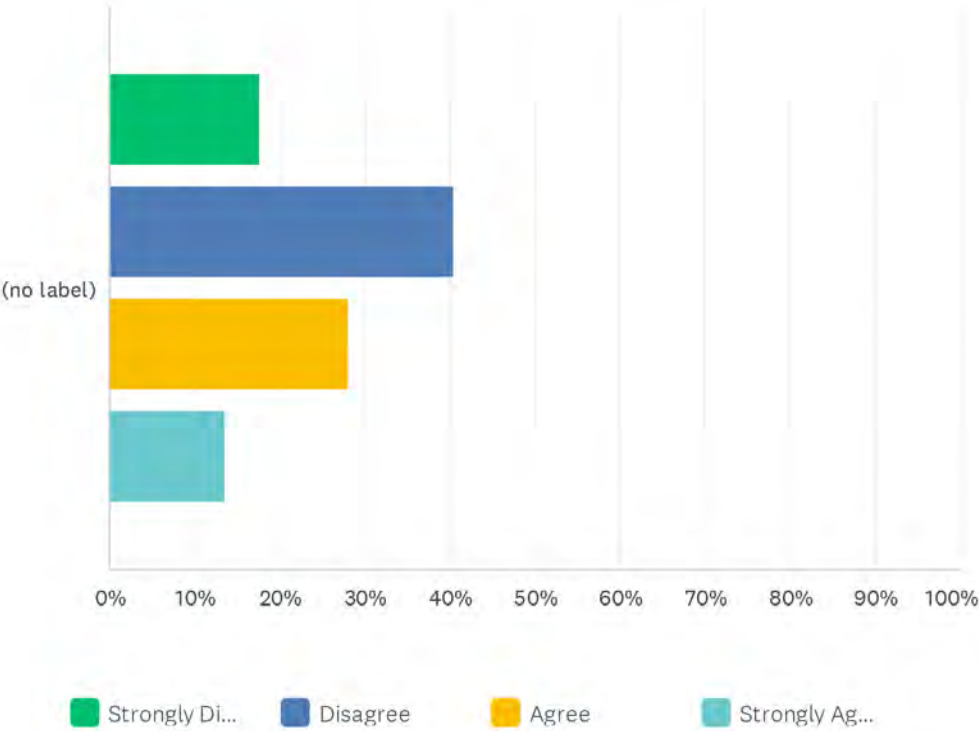
Answered: 22,365    Skipped: 5,305



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	7.21% 1,613	22.01% 4,922	42.79% 9,569	27.99% 6,261	22,365	2.92

Q29 Individuals should be excluded from the Sacraments based on their moral conduct.

Answered: 22,303    Skipped: 5,367

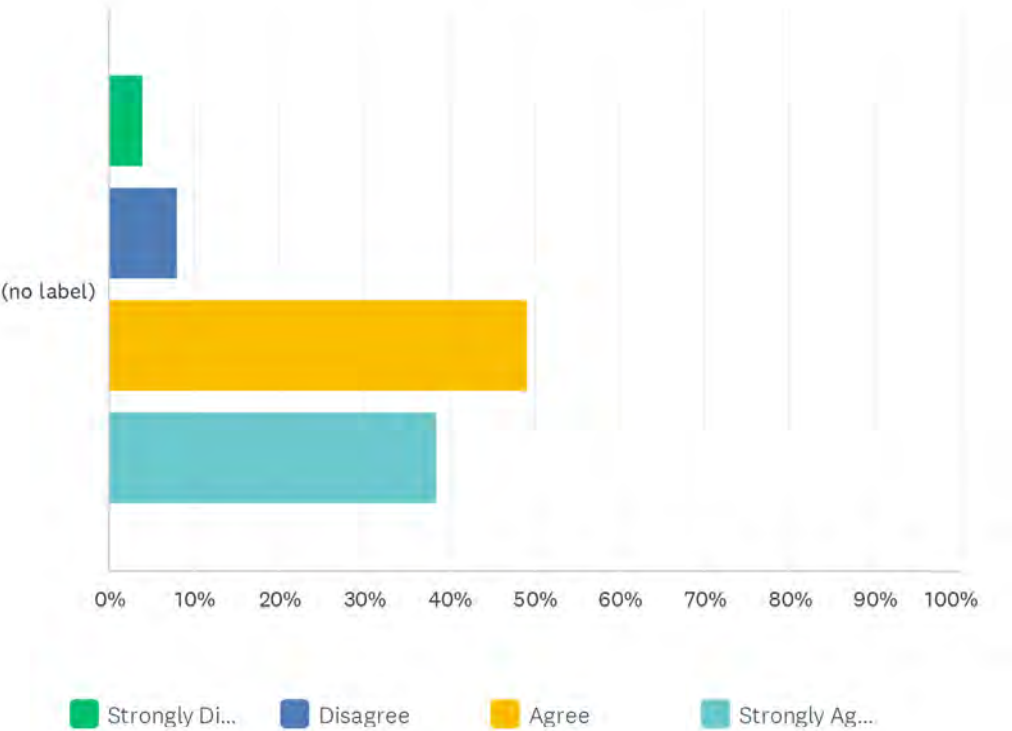


	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	17.76% 3,962	40.52% 9,037	28.15% 6,279	13.56% 3,025	22,303	2.38



Q30 The Church needs to communicate the Gospel in contemporary ways to youth and young adults.

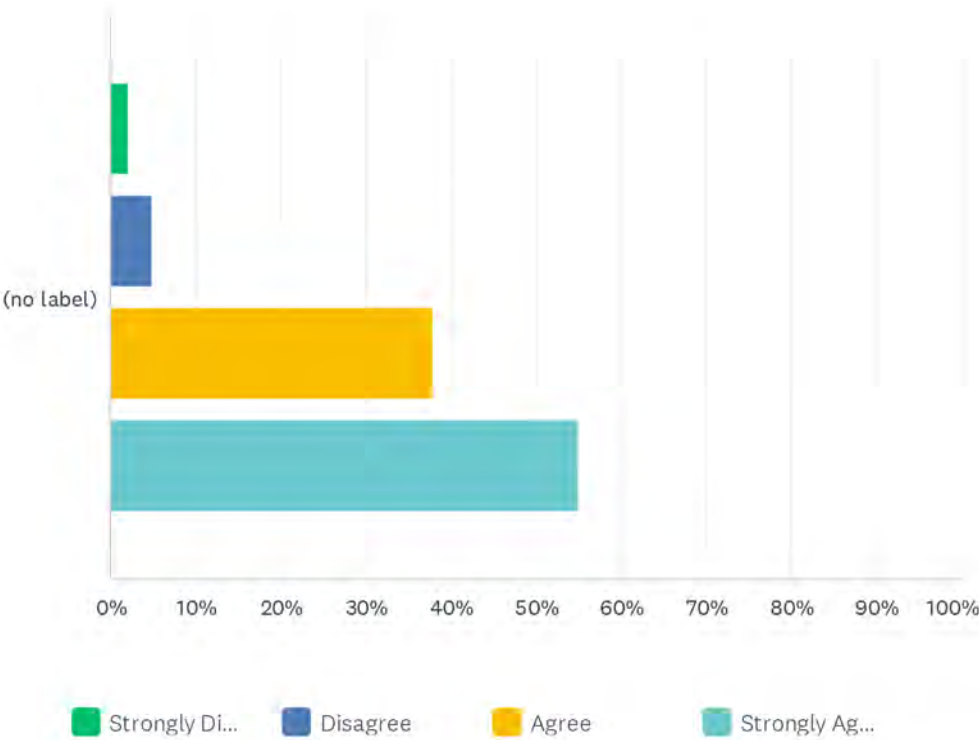
Answered: 22,255    Skipped: 5,415



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	3.95% 878	8.05% 1,791	49.34% 10,980	38.67% 8,606	22,255	3.23

Q31 Participation in the celebration of the Sacraments (such as Baptism, Reconciliation/Confession, Eucharist, Confirmation, Marriage, and Anointing of the Sick) are an important part of my life.

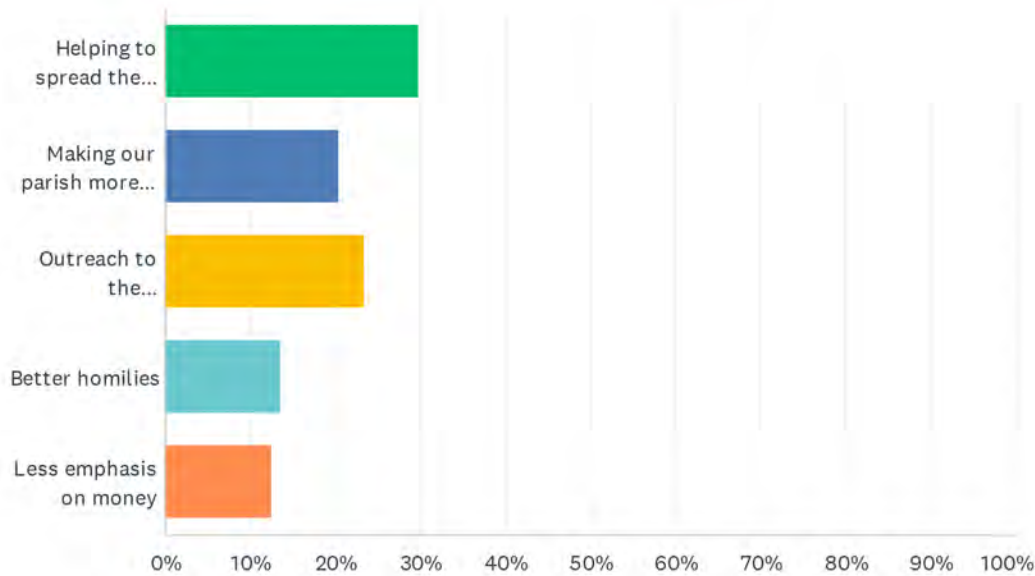
Answered: 22,218 Skipped: 5,452



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	2.19% 487	4.90% 1,088	37.89% 8,419	55.02% 12,224	22,218	3.46

Q32 If you could change one thing in your parish, what would be the most important?

Answered: 22,164    Skipped: 5,506



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Helping to spread the faith		29.85%	6,617
Making our parish more welcoming		20.54%	4,552
Outreach to the marginalized (such as the homeless, the unborn child, the incarcerated, and the immigrant)		23.40%	5,187
Better homilies		13.59%	3,013
Less emphasis on money		12.61%	2,795
TOTAL			22,164

## Q33 What year were you born?

Answered: 22,060 Skipped: 5,610

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
2008 or later	2.43%	535
2007	3.16%	696
2006	2.83%	625
2005	2.63%	581
2004	1.25%	276
2003	0.60%	133
2002	0.56%	123
2001	0.61%	134
2000	0.59%	131
1999	0.50%	111
1998	0.46%	102
1997	0.56%	123
1996	0.63%	139
1995	0.62%	136
1994	0.54%	120
1993	0.56%	123
1992	0.58%	127
1991	0.68%	151
1990	0.85%	188
1989	0.76%	167
1988	0.83%	183
1987	0.81%	179
1986	0.89%	197
1985	1.12%	247
1984	1.22%	270
1983	1.37%	302
1982	1.43%	316
1981	1.41%	311

## Q33 What year were you born?

Answered: 22,060    Skipped: 5,610

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1980	1.69%	373
1979	1.50%	332
1978	1.54%	339
1977	1.76%	388
1976	1.72%	380
1975	1.75%	386
1974	1.90%	420
1973	1.53%	337
1972	1.90%	420
1971	1.63%	360
1970	2.11%	465
1969	1.74%	384
1968	1.72%	379
1967	1.74%	383
1966	1.94%	427
1965	1.87%	413
1964	1.96%	433
1963	2.09%	461
1962	1.75%	385
1961	1.84%	407
1960	1.95%	430
1959	1.80%	398
1958	1.87%	412
1957	1.78%	392
1956	1.58%	348
1955	1.75%	387
1954	1.63%	360
1953	1.64%	362

## Q33 What year were you born?

Answered: 22,060    Skipped: 5,610

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1952	1.75%	385
1951	1.47%	324
1950	1.55%	341
1949	1.58%	348
1948	1.58%	349
1947	1.49%	329
1946	1.48%	326
1945	1.21%	266
1944	0.95%	210
1943	0.98%	216
1942	0.89%	196
1941	0.89%	197
1940	0.67%	148
1939	0.68%	150
1938	0.56%	124
1937	0.42%	93
1936	0.33%	73
1935	0.34%	76
1934	0.24%	52
1933	0.26%	57
1932	0.10%	21
1931	0.11%	25
1930	0.07%	16
1929	0.06%	13
1928	0.01%	3
1927	0.03%	6
1926	0.00%	1
1925	0.03%	6



Q33 What year were you born?

Answered: 22,060    Skipped: 5,610

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1923	0.01%	2
1922	0.00%	1
1921	0.01%	2
1920 or earlier	0.07%	16
TOTAL		22,060

## Q34 In what parish do you most frequently worship?

Answered: 22,000    Skipped: 5,670

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None	3.63%	798
All Hallows	0.92%	202
Ascension	0.53%	117
Blessed Sacrament	0.52%	115
Christ the King	0.34%	75
Corpus Christi	4.96%	1,091
Good Shepherd	5.99%	1,318
Guardian Angels	0.54%	118
Holy Family	1.08%	237
Holy Spirit	2.55%	560
Holy Trinity	0.93%	204
The Immaculata	1.89%	415
Immaculate Conception	0.31%	68
Immaculate Heart of Mary, Ramona	0.31%	69
Mary Star of the Sea	1.03%	227
Mater Dei	2.39%	526
Mission San Antonio de Pala	0.16%	36
Mission San Diego de Alcala	1.92%	422
Mission San Luis Rey de Francia	3.46%	761
Most Precious Blood	0.30%	66
Church of the Nativity	0.65%	144
Our Lady of Angels	0.29%	64
Our Lady of Grace	1.05%	230
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Calexico	0.91%	200
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Chula Vista	0.57%	125
Our Lady of Guadalupe, El Centro	0.20%	43
Our Lady of Guadalupe, San Diego	1.00%	220
Our Lady of Light	0.10%	23

## Q34 In what parish do you most frequently worship?

Answered: 22,000    Skipped: 5,670

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, San Diego	1.59%	349
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, San Ysidro	0.42%	92
Our Lady of Perpetual Help	0.65%	142
Our Lady of Refuge	0.08%	18
Our Lady of the Rosary	0.55%	121
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart	0.17%	37
Our Mother of Confidence	0.94%	206
Queen of Angels	0.29%	63
Church of the Resurrection	2.43%	535
Sacred Heart, Brawley	0.71%	157
Sacred Heart, Coronado	2.45%	540
Sacred Heart, San Diego	0.35%	76
St. Adelaide of Burgundy	0.03%	6
St. Agnes	0.45%	98
At. Anne	1.10%	243
St. Anthony of Padua, Imperial	0.20%	45
St. Anthony of Padua, National City	0.40%	89
St. Augustine of Canterbury	0.02%	5
St. Brigid	0.99%	217
St. Catherine Laboure	0.61%	135
St. Charles	0.95%	209
St. Charles Borromeo	0.40%	88
St. Columba	0.50%	111
St. Didacus	0.38%	83
St. Elizabeth of Hungary	0.08%	17
St. Elizabeth Seton	1.47%	323
St. Francis of Assisi	4.97%	1,094
St. Gabriel	0.64%	141

## Q34 In what parish do you most frequently worship?

Answered: 22,000    Skipped: 5,670

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
St. Gregory the Great	1.56%	344
St. James/St. Leo Mission	1.11%	245
St. John of the Cross	0.50%	109
St. John the Evangelist, Encinitas	1.42%	313
St. John the Evangelist, San Diego	0.42%	92
St. Joseph Cathedral	0.49%	107
St. Joseph, Holtville	0.12%	27
St. Joseph, Westmorland	0.05%	10
St. Jude Shrine of the West	0.27%	59
St. Kateri Tekakwitha	0.20%	43
St. Kieran	0.19%	42
St. Louise de Marillac	0.14%	30
Church of St. Luke	0.41%	90
St. Margaret	0.38%	84
St. Margaret Mary	1.23%	270
St. Mark	4.04%	889
St. Martin of Tours	0.61%	134
St. Mary, El Centro	0.40%	89
St. Mary, Escondido	1.44%	316
St. Mary, National City	0.42%	92
St. Mary Magdalene	0.71%	156
St. Mary, Star of the Sea	0.66%	145
St. Maximilian Kolbe Mission	0.01%	3
St. Michael, Poway	3.55%	781
St. Michael, San Diego	0.68%	150
St. Patrick, Calipatria	0.06%	13
St. Patrick, Carlsbad	1.21%	266
St. Patrick, San Diego	0.20%	45

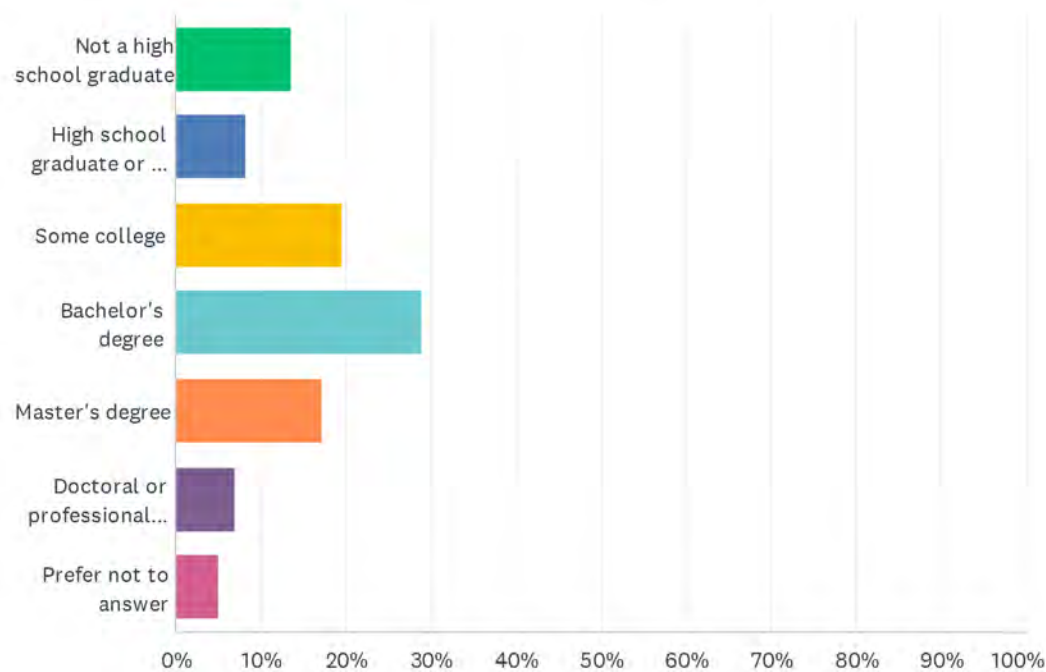
## Q34 In what parish do you most frequently worship?

Answered: 22,000    Skipped: 5,670

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
St. Peter the Apostle	0.49%	108
St. Pius X, Chula Vista	0.91%	200
St. Pius X, Jamul	0.21%	47
St. Richard	0.01%	2
St. Rita	0.97%	213
St. Rose of Lima	1.00%	219
St. Stephen	0.40%	89
St. Therese	1.01%	223
St. Therese of Carmel	1.41%	311
St. Thomas Indian Mission	0.08%	18
St. Thomas More	1.42%	313
St. Timothy	0.65%	142
St. Vincent de Paul	0.55%	121
San Rafael	0.99%	218
Santa Sophia	0.97%	214
Santa Ysabel Indian Mission	0.05%	10
Other	4.06%	894
None	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>22,000</b>

Q35 What is your highest level of educational attainment?

Answered: 21,968    Skipped: 5,702

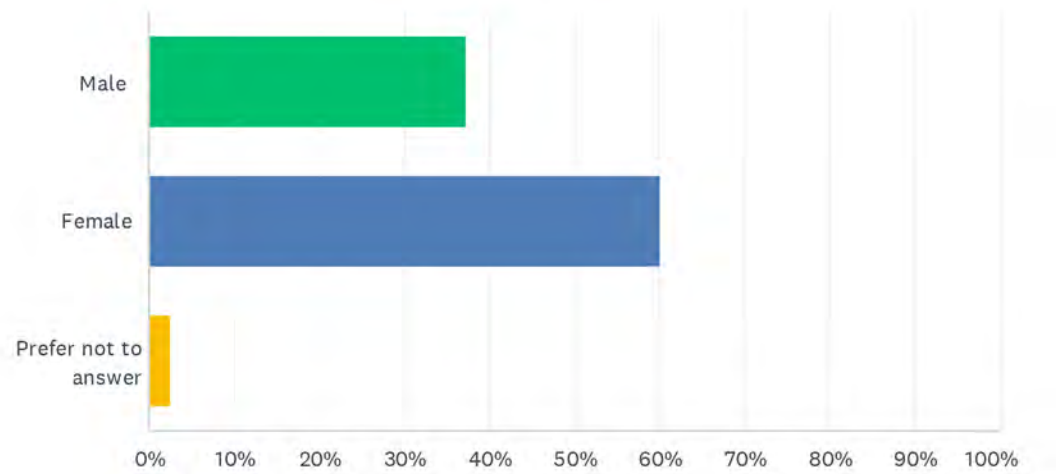


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not a high school graduate	13.63%	2,994
High school graduate or GED recipient	8.28%	1,819
Some college	19.65%	4,317
Bachelor's degree	28.99%	6,369
Master's degree	17.19%	3,777
Doctoral or professional degree	7.03%	1,545
Prefer not to answer	5.22%	1,147
TOTAL		21,968



Q36 What is your gender?

Answered: 21,958    Skipped: 5,712



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Male	37.34%	8,199
Female	60.08%	13,192
Prefer not to answer	2.58%	567
TOTAL		21,958

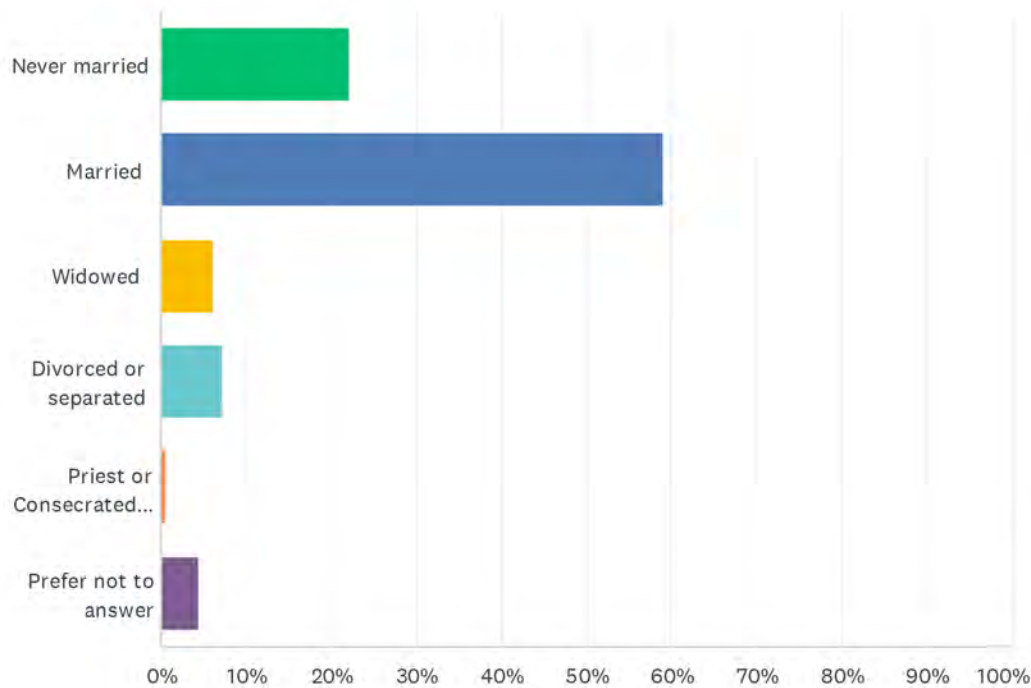
## Q37 What racial/ethnic group do you most identify with?

Answered: 21,943 Skipped: 5,727

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
White	38.29%	8,401
Hispanic or Latino/a	33.57%	7,366
Filipino	11.12%	2,440
Prefer not to answer	5.52%	1,211
Vietnamese	3.09%	677
Multiracial	2.64%	580
Other Asian	1.60%	351
Other	1.17%	256
Black or African American	1.04%	229
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.70%	153
Native American or Alaska Native	0.65%	142
Middle Eastern or North African	0.62%	137
TOTAL		21,943

Q38 What is your current marital status?

Answered: 21,931    Skipped: 5,739



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Never married	22.25%	4,879
Married	59.13%	12,967
Widowed	6.21%	1,363
Divorced or separated	7.20%	1,580
Priest or Consecrated Religious	0.69%	152
Prefer not to answer	4.51%	990
TOTAL		21,931

## Q39 What zip code do you currently reside in?

Answered: 21,881    Skipped: 5,789

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
91901	0.74%	161
91902	1.39%	304
91903	0.16%	36
91905	0.15%	33
91906	0.15%	33
91908	0.09%	19
91909	0.16%	34
91910	2.11%	461
91911	1.75%	384
91912	0.11%	23
91913	3.03%	662
91914	1.47%	321
91915	1.89%	414
91916	0.09%	20
91917	0.13%	29
91931	0.06%	13
91932	0.38%	84
91933	0.00%	1
91934	0.02%	5
91935	0.22%	49
91941	0.81%	177
91942	0.62%	136
91943	0.00%	1
91944	0.00%	1
91945	0.34%	74
91946	0.00%	1
91948	0.02%	4
91950	0.95%	208
91951	0.01%	2

## Q39 What zip code do you currently reside in?

Answered: 21,881    Skipped: 5,789

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
91962	0.06%	14
91963	0.01%	2
91976	0.00%	0
91977	0.84%	184
91978	0.27%	58
91979	0.01%	2
91980	0.01%	2
92003	0.11%	23
92004	0.05%	11
92007	0.20%	44
92008	0.55%	121
92009	1.37%	299
92010	0.43%	94
92011	0.77%	168
92014	0.52%	114
92018	0.12%	27
92019	0.89%	194
92020	0.91%	200
92021	0.80%	174
92022	0.05%	10
92023	0.02%	4
92024	1.17%	256
92025	1.11%	243
92026	2.03%	445
92027	1.89%	414
92028	0.77%	168
92029	0.69%	151
92030	0.03%	6

## Q39 What zip code do you currently reside in?

Answered: 21,881 Skipped: 5,789

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
92033	0.02%	5
92036	0.06%	14
92037	1.24%	271
92038	0.00%	0
92039	0.02%	4
92040	0.75%	164
92054	0.97%	213
92055	0.02%	5
92056	1.95%	427
92057	2.33%	510
92058	0.73%	159
92059	0.01%	3
92060	0.01%	2
92061	0.03%	7
92064	2.18%	476
92065	0.68%	149
92066	0.02%	5
92067	0.43%	95
92068	0.01%	2
92069	2.71%	592
92070	0.01%	2
92071	0.94%	205
92072	0.00%	1
92074	0.02%	4
92075	0.36%	79
92078	2.35%	515
92079	0.03%	6
92081	0.88%	193



## Q39 What zip code do you currently reside in?

Answered: 21,881    Skipped: 5,789

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
92082	0.51%	112
92083	2.24%	490
92084	2.23%	487
92085	0.02%	5
92086	0.02%	4
92091	0.16%	36
92101	0.72%	158
92102	0.54%	119
92103	0.84%	184
92104	0.51%	111
92105	1.28%	280
92106	0.65%	143
92107	0.44%	97
92108	0.43%	94
92109	0.74%	163
92110	0.87%	190
92111	1.47%	321
92112	0.04%	8
92113	0.58%	127
92114	1.31%	287
92115	0.86%	188
92116	0.51%	112
92117	1.19%	260
92118	2.25%	492
92119	0.67%	146
92120	1.25%	273
92121	0.20%	43
92122	1.12%	244

## Q39 What zip code do you currently reside in?

Answered: 21,881    Skipped: 5,789

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
92123	0.83%	181
92124	0.74%	162
92125	0.02%	4
92126	5.54%	1,213
92127	1.53%	335
92128	2.05%	448
92129	1.75%	382
92130	1.60%	350
92131	1.55%	339
92132	0.02%	4
92133	0.00%	0
92134	0.01%	3
92135	0.00%	0
92136	0.01%	2
92137	0.02%	4
92138	0.00%	1
92139	0.61%	134
92140	0.01%	3
92145	0.03%	6
92147	0.00%	0
92154	1.35%	296
92155	0.01%	3
92173	0.33%	72
92222	0.00%	0
92227	1.75%	382
92231	1.19%	261
92232	0.02%	5
92233	0.10%	22

## Q39 What zip code do you currently reside in?

Answered: 21,881 Skipped: 5,789

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
92243	0.48%	106
92244	0.00%	0
92249	0.03%	7
92250	0.14%	30
92251	0.30%	66
92257	0.02%	4
92259	0.00%	1
92266	0.00%	1
92273	0.02%	5
92274	0.00%	1
92275	0.00%	1
92281	0.11%	23
92283	0.06%	13
Other	2.79%	611
TOTAL		21,881



**DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO**

**SYNOD**

**2021 - 2024**

**FINDINGS**  
**FROM THE DIOCESAN SYNOD SURVEY**  
**F E B R U A R Y 2 0 2 3**

**Professors Fred Galloway, EdD and Robert Donmoyer, PhD**  
**University of San Diego**

**[SDCATHOLIC.ORG/SYNOD](https://SDCATHOLIC.ORG/SYNOD)**



## Introduction

This report provides an overview of the empirical findings from a survey administered to parish participants throughout San Diego and Imperial counties as part of the ongoing synod process. The survey was developed from data gathered from more than 1,100 listening sessions held at parishes throughout San Diego and Imperial counties and was based on the eight themes that emerged from them. For each of these themes, we constructed three related statements, and we asked participants to rate their level of agreement on a four-point scale, with response options given by strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), agree (3), and strongly agree (4). For each respondent, we then calculated an overall average score for the three related statements; this became their score for that theme or construct.

In addition to these 24 statements, we also asked respondents 14 questions, including seven traditional demographic questions and seven involving some aspect of their religious faith. While the demographic questions contained measures such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, educational attainment, Zip Code, and marital status, our seven religious faith questions ranged from type, frequency of attendance at Mass, and place of worship to questions about the respondents' relationship with both God and the Church.

In the subsequent sections, we first briefly discuss the procedures followed during the survey's administration and then move on to the demographic and religion-related responses for our sample of more than 27,000 participants. We

then provide an overview of the constructs and report on the five highest and lowest-scoring statements. A more detailed discussion of each of the constructs follows, including the extent to which various demographic factors help explain variation in the constructs. This next section contains a brief discussion of those respondents that chose "Other" as the parish where they most frequently worshipped since this group also includes the homeless and incarcerated. The report then concludes with a discussion of the main takeaways from the analysis.

## Procedures and Sample Demographics

Before the survey was released to the public, the 24 statements and 14 demographic and religious-faith questions were discussed and critiqued at two Synod Commission meetings, which resulted in refinements to many of the statements and questions. After arriving at a working version of the survey, which would be administered in English-, Spanish-, and Vietnamese-language versions, we then held two large pre-testing meetings at the Diocese of San Diego, one in Spanish and the other in English, where the respondents were able to use their phones and iPads to complete the draft survey. Not surprisingly, these two additional pre-testing meetings yielded further insights about and refinements of the survey items. Before the survey was released, more than 75 individuals had the opportunity to comment on the various statements and questions. The survey was released the day after Labor Day,



Sept. 6, 2022, and closed on Nov. 29, 2022.

Our final sample consisted of 27,670 individuals who answered at least one of the survey questions. Most respondents (89%) took the survey in English, followed by 10% in Spanish and 1% in Vietnamese. From a gender perspective, women were overrepresented among respondents compared to men (60.1% vs. 37.3%) and were also a bit older than the survey's male respondents, with the average age for women at 52 and the average age for men at 49. Interestingly, for both men and women, the 50-59-year-old interval was the most represented, followed by the 60-69-year-old interval. Surprisingly, there were more respondents between the ages of 14 and 19 for both men and women than those between 20 and 29.

Our sample was also well educated, with almost 73% of respondents having at least some college and slightly less than one in four having earned a graduate degree. Most respondents were also married (59.1%), with 22.2% never married and 13.4% either widowed, divorced, or separated. From a racial and ethnic perspective, the two largest groups of respondents were White (38.3%) and Hispanic (33.6%), followed by Filipino at 11.1%, Vietnamese at 3.1%, Multiracial at 2.6%, Other Asian at 1.6%, and Other at 1.2%; the other four categories (Native American or Alaska Native, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Middle Eastern or North African) had 1.0% or less representation.

## Religious Faith Questions

From a religious-faith perspective, 95.9% of respondents considered themselves Catholic, and 91.6% were baptized as a child or an infant, with the rest being baptized or confirmed as an adult. More than two-thirds of respondents (67.8%) reported attending Mass weekly, while 9.7% reported attending Mass daily. There was a strong preference for attending Mass in person, with 87.7% of respondents selecting that choice versus 12.3% of respondents who preferred Mass virtually in the future. When asked to rate their relationship with God and then the Church on a ten-point scale where higher numbers are associated with stronger feelings, their relationship with God was somewhat stronger than with the Church (7.12 versus 6.96), and there was significantly more consensus around their relationship with God compared to their relationship with the Church.

When respondents were asked if they could change one thing in their parish, 29.9% of respondents selected “helping to spread the faith,” followed by 23.4% who chose “outreach to the marginalized.” In order, the next three responses were about “making our parish more welcoming” (20.5%), “better homilies” (13.6%), and “less emphasis on money” (12.6%). Interestingly, respondents mentioned almost 100 parishes; the three most represented parishes were: Good Shepherd, Corpus Christi, and St. Francis of Assisi.





## An Overview of the Constructs and the Highest and Lowest Scoring Statements

As described in the introduction, we created eight constructs, each consisting of three statements. These constructs are in Table 1, and their averages are all close to 3.0, with a range of less than half a point (2.82 to 3.24). The fact that the averages are close to 3.0 means that respondents were most likely to “agree” with the various statements that made up the construct. In addition, the standard deviations are also within a narrow range suggesting a consistent consensus surrounding the constructs. Interestingly, the highest degree of consensus was for Anger at the Clergy Sexual Abuse Scandals, and the least was for The Sacramental Life of the Church. Although discussed in more detail later, it is interesting to note that the two highest-scoring

constructs, The Sacramental Life of the Church and Community Life, both involve meaningful personal participation events at the church; in contrast, the lowest-scoring constructs, Inclusiveness and Acceptance vs. Doctrinal Strength and Synodal Statements both deal with things where the Church has some control.

To get a sense of the highest- and lowest-scoring statements, Tables 2 and 3 provide the five survey items with the highest and lowest overall scores. Examination of Table 2 reveals that three of the five highest-scoring items again involve personal participation events; the other two are actions the Church has taken or needs to take. Among the lowest-scoring statements, three involve Church actions while two involve the local parish; sadly, the lowest-scoring item involves whether an individual would be missed if they stopped participating in their parish.

### Table 1

*Means and standard deviations for the constructs. The “mean” represents the average score from a scale of 1-4 that respondents answered on the survey. The higher the mean indicates agreement with each statement on average.*

Construct Scores (Highest to Lowest)	Mean *	Standard Deviation **
The Sacramental Life of the Church	3.24	.61
Community Life	3.21	.60
Priestly Ministry	3.06	.56
Issues of Youth and Young Families	3.04	.56
Church as a Pathway to God	3.00	.64
Anger at the Clergy Sexual Abuse Scandals	3.00	.47
Synodal Statements	2.84	.55
Inclusiveness, and Acceptance vs Doctrinal Strength	2.82	.60

- Standard deviation is a measure of how dispersed the data is in relation to the mean. Low standard deviation means data are clustered around the mean, and high standard deviation indicates data are more spread out.



## Table 2

Means and standard deviations for the survey items. The “mean” represents the average score from a scale of 1-4 that respondents answered on the survey. The higher the mean indicates agreement with each statement on average.

The Five Survey Items with the Highest Average Score	Mean	Standard Deviation
Participation in the celebration of the Sacraments (such as Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Marriage, Reconciliation, and Anointing of the Sick) is an important part of my life.	3.46	.69
The cover-up conducted by some bishops, rather than individual cases, was most disappointing.	3.30	.76
Participating in my parish community draws me closer to God.	3.28	.71
I feel welcomed and included in my parish community.	3.25	.73
The Church needs to communicate with the Gospel in contemporary ways to youth and young adults.	3.23	.76
Anger at the Clergy Sexual Abuse Scandals	3.00	.47
Synodal Statements	2.84	.55
Inclusiveness, and Acceptance vs Doctrinal Strength	2.82	.60

## Table 3

Means and standard deviations for the survey items. The “mean” represents the average score from a scale of 1-4 that respondents answered on the survey. The higher the mean indicates agreement with each statement on average.

The Five Survey Items with the Lowest Average Score	Mean	Standard Deviation
If I stopped participating in my parish I would be missed.	2.60	.94
Individuals should be excluded from the sacraments based on their moral conduct. (Reverse scored.)	2.62	.93
The Church listens.	2.70	.76
Inclusiveness and acceptance in the Church are more important than strictly following the Church’s rules.	2.72	.93
My parish does a good job of drawing younger people into a greater faith in God.	2.79	.86



## The Constructs

This section briefly discusses each of the constructs and their associated questions. In addition, the takeaways from a series of regression analyses that looked at the extent to which the demographic factors collected in the survey might be able to explain variation in the constructs are also discussed. However, rather than reporting the detailed regression results, the takeaways are described in simple English.

## The Sacramental Life of the Church

“The Sacramental Life of the Church” construct received the highest score of our eight constructs, with an average score of 3.24, revealing that respondents generally agreed with the three statements that made up the construct. “Participation in the celebration of the Sacraments is an important part of my life” had the highest score of any of the 24

statements, with an average score being almost halfway between “agree” and “strongly agree.” Interestingly, all three of the statements that make up the construct focused directly on the actions and feelings of the participants alone, rather than on something that the Church has done or should be doing.

Results from the regression analysis suggest a strong age effect for this construct, with older parishioners agreeing with the statements more strongly than younger parishioners. Similarly, we found that individuals who identify as Hispanic, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Middle Eastern also agreed more strongly with the statements than those of other racial and ethnic backgrounds. However, we found that those with at least a bachelor’s degree and those who never married tended to agree less with the statements, resulting in an overall lower mean score for the construct.

## Table 4

*Means and standard deviations for the survey items. The “mean” represents the average score from a scale of 1-4 that respondents answered on the survey. The higher the mean indicates agreement with each statement on average.*

The Sacramental Life of the Church Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation
The Sacramental Life of the Church Construct	3.24	.61
Participation in the Mass is my most meaningful ongoing encounter with God.	3.15	.88
Participation in Mass helps me to live out the Gospel by loving my neighbor.	3.13	.70
Participation in the celebration of the Sacraments (such as Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Marriage, Reconciliation, and Anointing of the Sick) is an important part of my life.	3.46	.69



## Community Life

The second highest-scoring construct was “Community Life,” with a mean score of 3.21, well above the threshold of 3.0 that registered agreement among respondents. As with the “Sacramental Life of the Church” construct discussed previously, all three statements refer to the parish community rather than something the Church beyond the parish level has done or needs to do. The scores on the three statements that form the construct were closely grouped, with “Participating in my parish community draws me closer to God” scoring the highest, and “Friendships in my parish are important to me” receiving the lowest score – although respondents agreed with all three statements and the differences among scores for different items was not great.

Regression results revealed another strong age effect, with older parishioners more likely to agree with the statements than younger parishioners. We also found that Hispanics, Filipinos, Vietnamese, and Middle Easterners agreed more with the three statements than those from other racial and ethnic backgrounds, as did the males in our sample. From an educational perspective, those with at least some college experience tended to agree less than those without any college, and the effect size increased with the level of education. In addition, those individuals who never married also agreed less than those who were married, separated, widowed, or divorced.

## Table 5

*Means and standard deviations for the survey items. The “mean” represents the average score from a scale of 1-4 that respondents answered on the survey. The higher the mean indicates agreement with each statement on average.*

Community Life Construct and Associated Survey items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Community Life Construct	3.21	.60
I feel welcomed and included in my parish community.	3.25	.73
Participating in my parish community draws me closer to God.	3.28	.71
Friendships in my parish are important to me.	3.15	.75



## Priestly Ministry

The mean score for the “Priestly Ministry” construct was 3.06, revealing that respondents largely agreed with the three statements that made up the construct. Among the three statements, the highest mean score was for “My parish priest does a good job of handling issues facing the parish and community,” and the lowest score was given to “The Church’s renewed emphasis on the importance of lay ministries is crucial in responding to the declining number of priests.” As two of the three statements directly involve existing parish priests, respondents appear to be largely satisfied with the priestly ministry.

Our regression analysis again revealed a strong age effect, with older parishioners tending to agree more than younger parishioners; this effect grew monotonically stronger as we moved through the ten age categories. Hispanics, Filipinos, and Vietnamese also tended to agree more with the three statements, while Blacks agreed less. From an educational perspective, respondents with at least some college experience agreed less than those without any college experience. We also found that those never-married respondents agreed less with the statements, while those who were divorced or separated tended to agree more.

## Table 6

*Means and standard deviations for the survey items. The “mean” represents the average score from a scale of 1-4 that respondents answered on the survey. The higher the mean indicates agreement with each statement on average.*

Priestly Ministry Construct and Associated Survey Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Priestly Ministry Construct	3.06	.56
Over the years, my parish priests have helped me grow in my relationship with God.	3.08	.80
My parish priest does a good job of handling issues facing the parish and the community.	3.16	.77
The Church’s renewed emphasis on the importance of lay ministries is crucial in responding to the declining number of priests.	2.99	.75



## Church as a Pathway to God

The mean score for the “Church as a Pathway to God” construct was exactly 3.0, signaling agreement with the tightly grouped statements making up the construct. The two statements with the highest scores in the construct involved the Church playing a role in moral decision-making and acting as the primary pathway to God, while the lowest-scoring statement concerned participation in one of the many Church groups.

Results from the regression analysis again revealed a strong age effect, with older parishioners more likely to agree with the statements underlying this construct – except for the centenarians who agreed less. We also found that Hispanics, Filipinos, and Vietnamese agreed more than those with different racial and ethnic backgrounds, as did our male respondents. However, those with at least some college agreed less, and this effect increased monotonically with the level of education. We also found that those who never married and were divorced or separated tended to agree less than those married or widowed.

## Table 7

*Means and standard deviations for the survey items. The “mean” represents the average score from a scale of 1-4 that respondents answered on the survey. The higher the mean indicates agreement with each statement on average.*

Church as a Pathway to God Construct and Associated Survey Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Church as a Pathway to God Construct	3.00	.64
The Church plays a significant role in my moral decision-making.	3.07	.77
The Church is my primary pathway to God.	3.01	.86
I have participated in at least one group in the church, which helped me grow as a disciple of Christ. (Some examples are Cursillo, Knights of Co-lumbus, Matrimonios, women’s guild, Scripture study groups, and Cou-ples for Christ.)	2.92	.88





## Issues of Youth and Young Families

Examination of the “Issues of Youth and Young Families” construct again reveals a mean score close to 3.0, in this case, 3.04, which indicated a general level of agreement with the three statements that comprise the construct. Interestingly, the highest-scoring statement was that respondents felt that “The Church needs to communicate with the Gospel in contemporary ways to youth and young adults”; the lowest-scoring “Was my parish does a good job of drawing younger people into a greater faith in God.” Together, the means for these statements reveal that the Church has work to do with the engagement of youth and young adults; however, respondents felt that their parish effectively formed young people into the faith through their religious education programs or Catholic school.

The significant factors that emerged from the regression analysis for this construct included level of education, race/ethnicity, marital status, and age. Interestingly, the age effect was less pronounced for this construct, although those over 60 still agreed more with the three statements than those aged 20-29, who agreed less. From an education perspective, those with at least some college tended to agree less than those with less education. Once again, Hispanics, Filipinos, and Vietnamese agreed more than those from other racial and ethnic backgrounds, as did those respondents that were either divorced or separated.

## Table 8

*Means and standard deviations for the survey items. The “mean” represents the average score from a scale of 1-4 that respondents answered on the survey. The higher the mean indicates agreement with each statement on average.*

Issues of Youth and Young Families Construct and Associated Survey Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Issues of Youth and Young Families Construct	3.04	.56
My parish does a good job of drawing younger people into a greater faith in God.	2.79	.86
The Church needs to communicate with the Gospel in contemporary ways to youth and young adults.	3.23	.76
My parish effectively forms young people in the Catholic faith through Catholic school or religious education programs.	3.09	.77



## Anger at the Clergy Sexual Abuse Scandals

The mean score for the “Anger at the Clergy Sexual Abuse Scandals” was exactly 3.0, signaling perfect agreement with the loosely grouped statements. The highest-scoring statement in the construct (and the second highest-scoring statement in the entire survey) was “The coverup conducted by some bishops, rather than individual cases, was most disappointing,” with a mean score of 3.30, while the lowest-scoring statement at 2.83 was “The Catholic Church is now handling sexual abuse issues more positively.” Together, the construct and associated statements suggest that although the Church is now handling sexual abuse issues more positively, the coverup conducted by bishops has made it more difficult to attract people to the Church.

Regression analysis revealed an age effect that began at age 40 as respondents tended to agree more with the construct as age increased. We also found that compared with respondents who never completed high school, increased education was associated with more agreement with the three statements; this effect increased monotonically through those with doctoral or professional degrees. From a racial and ethnic perspective, multiracial respondents tended to agree more, and those who never married less.

## Table 9

*Means and standard deviations for the survey items. The “mean” represents the average score from a scale of 1-4 that respondents answered on the survey. The higher the mean indicates agreement with each statement on average.*

Anger at the Clergy Sexual Abuse Scandals Construct and Associated Survey Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Anger at the Clergy Sexual Abuse Scandals Construct	3.00	.47
The sexual abuse scandal makes it more difficult to attract people to the Church.	2.89	.84
The cover-up conducted by some bishops, rather than individual cases, was most disappointing.	3.30	.76
The Catholic Church is now handling sexual abuse issues more positively.	2.83	.68
The Catholic Church is now handling sexual abuse issues more positively.	2.83	.68



## Inclusiveness and Acceptance vs Doctrinal Strength

The mean score for this important construct was 2.82, the lowest scoring of all eight survey constructs. Two of the statements in the construct were among the four lowest-scoring statements in the entire survey: “Inclusiveness and acceptance in the Church are more important than strictly following the Church’s rules” was 2.72, and the reverse-scored statement “Individuals should be excluded from the sacraments based on their moral conduct,” at 2.62; this statement was reverse scored so that more agreement signifies greater acceptance and inclusion. Since a mean score of 2.5 suggests neither “agreement” nor “disagreement,” it seems as if respondents felt strongly on both sides of the inclusiveness and acceptance vs. doctrinal strength debate, as revealed by the lack of consensus as shown by two of the three

highest standard deviations in the entire survey. Despite strong feelings on both sides of the issue, respondents felt their parish did a good job of balancing the concerns with a score of 3.14.

For this construct, there was a strong negative age effect beginning at age 20, while older respondents were less likely to agree with the three statements than younger respondents. Also, those with some college or less were less likely to agree, while those with graduate degrees were more likely to agree. Perhaps unsurprisingly, we found that Blacks, Hispanics, Filipinos, and Vietnamese all tended to agree more with the statements than Whites or Middle Easterners. We also found that never-married individuals and those divorced or separated agreed more than married folks, and those widowed agreed even less.

### Table 10

*Means and standard deviations for the survey items. The “mean” represents the average score from a scale of 1-4 that respondents answered on the survey. The higher the mean indicates agreement with each statement on average.*

Inclusiveness and Acceptance vs. Doctrinal Strength Construct and Asso-ciated Survey Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Inclusiveness and Acceptance vs. Doctrinal Strength Construct	2.82	.60
Inclusiveness and acceptance in the Church are more important than strictly following the Church’s rules.	2.72	.93
Individuals should be excluded from the sacraments based on their mor-al conduct. (Reverse scored)	2.62	.93
My parish does a good job of balancing inclusiveness/acceptance, on the one hand, with catholic teaching, on the other.	3.14	.77
My parish does a good job of balancing inclusiveness/acceptance, on the one hand, with catholic teaching, on the other.	3.14	.77



## Synodal Statements

Our final construct, Synodal Statements, had the second-lowest score of our eight constructs, at 2.84. The highest level of agreement was for “The Church must achieve a deeper level of participation and input from all its members,” with a mean of 3.24. The other two statements were among the lowest-scoring statements in the survey: “If I stopped participating in my parish I would be missed” at 2.60, and “The Church listens” at 2.70. Together, these statements reveal that the Church needs to listen more to all its members and perhaps encourage greater participation and caring about each other.

For our final construct, we found that older parishioners agreed more with the three statements than younger parishioners, as did males and those identifying as Black, Hispanic, Filipino, Vietnamese, other Asian, and Middle Easterners. From an educational perspective, those with at least some college tended to agree less, and this effect increased with the level of education. We also found that those never-married respondents agreed less with the statements.

Table 11

Means and standard deviations for the survey items. The “mean” represents the average score from a scale of 1-4 that respondents answered on the survey. The higher the mean indicates agreement with each statement on average.

Synodal Statements Construct and Associated Survey Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Synodal Statements Construct	2.84	.55
The Church must achieve a deeper level of participation and input from all its members.	3.21	.66
If I stopped participating in my parish I would be missed.	2.60	.94
The Church listens.	2.70	.76
My parish does a good job of balancing inclusiveness/acceptance, on the one hand, with catholic teaching, on the other.	3.14	.77



## A Quick Look at those who Selected Other as the Parish where they Most Frequently Worship

A total of 894 respondents selected “Other” as the parish where they most frequently worship, representing 4% of the 22,000 who answered the question. From a demographic perspective, these respondents were different in that they were younger and less likely to be Catholic, Filipino, Middle Eastern, married, and more likely to be male, never married, and have not completed high school. When examining our eight constructs, these individuals also had lower mean values for “Sacramental Life,” “Church as a Pathway to God,” “Community Life,” “Priestly Ministry,” and “Synodal Statements,” and a higher mean value for “Inclusiveness and Acceptance vs Doctrinal Strength.” There were no significant differences for the “Anger at the Clergy Sexual Abuse Scandals” and “Youth and Young Families” constructs.

A small subset of these respondents was either homeless or incarcerated, and these 98 individuals were different demographically. Specifically, they were significantly less likely to be Catholic, White, Filipino, Vietnamese, Middle Eastern, married, and have any undergraduate or graduate degree. Conversely, they were more likely to be male, Hispanic, divorced or separated, and have a high school degree or some college as their highest level of education. In terms of the constructs, the 98 respondents had lower mean values for “Sacramental Life,” “Anger at the Clergy Sexual

Abuse Scandals,” “Inclusiveness and Acceptance vs Doctrinal Strength,” and higher mean scores for “Community Life,” “Priestly Ministry,” and “Synodal Statements.”

## Discussion

This report presents several important takeaways from the analysis presented and described here. The first involves the willingness of more than 27,000 parishioners to have their voices heard through participation in the survey, which has allowed for a robust analysis of their responses. In addition, the demographic and religious diversity among respondents speaks to the level of comfort that respondents felt when completing the survey, something to be celebrated, given the highly personal nature of the questions and statements. Together, this suggests that the results of the analysis have value in presenting a snapshot of where parishioners were at the end of 2022, as well as in allowing Church officials to tailor interventions and programs to the area of greatest need. In an era of diminishing resources, this information should prove enormously helpful.

Given the large sample size, the fact that the mean scores for all eight constructs are within a narrow band around the number representing agreement (3.0) suggests that most respondents agreed with the statements that formed the constructs. Despite this overall level of agreement, some construct scores were higher than others. For instance, the two highest scores were for the “Sacramental Life of the Church”





and “Community Life,” both largely involving personal participation events. The scores for these two constructs (3.24 and 3.21) suggest a strong level of agreement in contrast with the two lowest-scoring constructs, “Inclusiveness and Acceptance vs. Doctrinal Strength” and “Synodal Statements,” which involve things controlled by the Church, such as listening, achieving a deeper level of participation from members, and balancing inclusiveness and acceptance with doctrinal strength.

In addition to the constructs, several individual statements stand out for their inferential value. While respondents felt welcomed in their parish community and enjoyed participating in events that brought them closer to God, survey participants’ responses suggest more work is needed to draw younger people into the Church; one way to do this, according to survey participants, is to communicate the Gospel in more contemporary ways. Respondents also felt that while the Catholic Church is now handling sexual abuse issues more positively, the scandals have made it difficult to attract people to the Church; it may be significant that respondents put most of the blame on the coverup conducted by the bishops rather than the individuals who engaged in the inappropriate behavior themselves.

The regression part of the analysis revealed several factors that helped explain some of the variation in construct scores. For example, age was an explanatory factor for all eight constructs, with older parishioners generally having more traditional values than younger

ones. Age differences were evident in stronger positive feelings about sacramental life, church as a pathway to God, the priestly ministry, community life, and anger at the sexual abuse scandals, and stronger negative feelings about inclusion and acceptance. From a racial and ethnic perspective, Hispanics, Filipinos, and Vietnamese consistently displayed the same attitudes as older parishioners with one important exception: They supported more inclusion and acceptance rather than siding with the relative importance of Church doctrine. Education also played a role in that we generally found that the more educated a respondent was, the less likely they were to agree with the statements involving the sacramental life of the Church, community life, church as a pathway to God, issues of youth and young families, priestly ministry, and synodal statements, and more likely to agree with anger at the clergy sexual abuse scandals and the importance of inclusion and acceptance vs. doctrinal strength.